



Jan. 27, 2014

## Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week, the Board recommended a FY 15 budget that calls on lawmakers to honor the General State Aid (GSA) Foundation Level commitment of \$6,119 per student. The total increase being sought on behalf of Illinois students is \$1.08 billion dollars, the majority of which is an \$879 million increase to GSA.

While that seems like an awful lot, and some may question the size of the request, it still falls well short of the Education Funding Advisory Board recommended level and the Board feels it is absolutely necessary that we advocate for this amount. When adjusting the FY09 K-12 education budget for inflation, the Board’s request amounts to a 1.5 percent decrease from the adjusted FY09 levels.

Some of the proposed FY15 increases or expenses include:

- \$879 million increase, or a 19.8 percent increase over last year, for General State Aid (GSA) to fully fund the Foundation Level at \$6,119 per pupil.
- \$25 million increase for early childhood education, providing an 8.3 percent increase over FY14 levels but still falling short of the FY09 levels. Roughly 4,500 more children age 3-5 and 550 0-3 year-olds would be served in preschool programs under this proposed budget than were served in Fiscal Year 2014.
- \$12.3 million increase in the Bilingual Education program to help districts meet the needs of the growing bilingual population, which accounts for about 10 percent of all students. Since FY05, this population has increased at a rate of 4.7 percent per year.
- \$27.1 million increase for State Assessments based upon the cost of administering both the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exams and the ACT and Workkeys assessments for 11th graders. The administration of PARCC and ACT is necessary to provide information in the transition years to the new PARCC assessments. Illinois is a member of PARCC’s governing board. The additional funding will complete the transition from state testing on the previous learning standards to the new, more rigorous Illinois Learning Standards.
- \$10 million for an Extended Learning Time program. Currently, the only funding available to support extended learning time is the federal 21st Century Learning Center grants. In FY 13, the agency received 102 applications for 21st Century Learning Center grants but only had funding available to support 43 projects. The additional funds would allow ISBE to assist up to 100 additional sites to extend learning time for students and support collaboration time for teachers.

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- \$30.4 million increase to Regular/Vocational Transportation line to begin restoring this line to previous levels. The Regular/Vocational line item has not been fully funded since FY10. An increase of \$30.4 million will result in an estimated proration level of 80 percent.
- \$5 million is being requested for district emergency assistance that would allow the state superintendent to respond to districts in distress that need assistance getting their schools up and running immediately. This would allow for a rapid flow of funds to schools without having to jump through federal hoops or not qualify for federal funds.
- \$2 million increase in the budget to provide assistance to low-income students taking Advance Placement exams. Illinois is a leader in closing the gap for Latino AP test takers, providing additional access to college for this population.

The Board is also recommending a \$450 million capital request to support districts as they improve their technology infrastructure. This funding will be targeted toward improving the connectivity of buildings to broadband internet service as well as improving the network capabilities with the classroom. This request does not include funding for individual devices.

The Board's recommendation will now go to the Governor and General Assembly for consideration as the FY15 state budget-making process gets under way. We will be working with lawmakers throughout the spring, but we will need help from you and your constituencies to influence lawmakers as they consider our request and make their decisions. We are making a request for a significant increase in funding at a time when revenues are expected to drop and will need help from everyone if we hope to make a difference.

Have a great week.

Chris

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### **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>.*

- **ISBE offices closed for Lincoln's Birthday** – Feb. 12
- **ISBE offices closed for Presidents' Day** – Feb. 17
- **Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision), Part 25 (Educator Licensure) and Part 30 (Programs for the Preparation of Principals in Illinois)** – Public comment period ends Feb. 18
- **Deadline to complete 2013-14 District Technology Plan on IIRC** – Feb. 28 ([http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/elearning/html/tech\\_plan.htm](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/elearning/html/tech_plan.htm))
- **National School Breakfast Week** – March 3-7
- **Illinois 5Essentials Survey** – To be conducted March 17 through April 25
- **School Nutrition Employee Week** – May 5-9
- **Applications for the Exception to the 1.0 Percent Cap due** – May 16
- **ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day** – May 26
- **Student Health Data – Vision system report deadline** – June 30
- **ISBE offices closed for Independence Day** – July 4
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Fall 2014** – Friday, August 15, 2014 (See <http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm> for public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)

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## PARCC

### Sample Test Questions Now Ready for Computer Practice

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers recently posted sample test items for every grade on the testing platform students will use when taking the field test later this spring.

This means teachers, students, parents and others will be able to engage with the sample items using computer-based tools such as drag-and-drop, multiple select, text highlighting, and an equation builder. PARCC also released online tutorials that demonstrate how students will navigate the test; how to use the computer-based tools; and features that make the test more accessible for all students, including those with disabilities and English learners.

The sample items were available previously as downloadable printouts. The sample items have gone through a rigorous review process to ensure they are of high quality and are similar to the types of items students will see when the test is fully operational in spring 2015.

The sample items are available at [www.parcconline.org/computer-based-samples](http://www.parcconline.org/computer-based-samples). To get a true understanding of the range of rigor, item types and functionalities, users are encouraged to try out items across all grades and to provide feedback. The sample items will not be scored.

Read more at <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-sample-test-questions-now-ready-computer-practice> or visit the main page at <http://www.parcconline.org> for a variety of resources.

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## Winter Reminder

### Guidance on Emergency Days and the School Calendar Approval Process

As a reminder, each district is required to schedule at least five emergency days in their school calendar. These emergency days may be used at the discretion of the district, but must be made up prior to the end of the school year. Any unused emergency days must be removed prior to submitting the final school calendar.

Once a district uses all of its five proposed emergency days, if they must close the district due to a weather emergency or other condition beyond the control of the district that poses a hazardous threat to the health and

safety of students, they may request approval for an Act of God day or modify their calendar to schedule additional days at the end of the school year. An Act of God Day must be approved by the appropriate Regional Superintendent and the State Superintendent of Education. Act of God Days reduce the required number of student attendance days in the school calendar, but do not negatively impact General State Aid.

ISBE has a guidance document on the approval process for public school calendars posted at [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/ps\\_guidelines.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/ps_guidelines.pdf). Please take some time to review the guidance document and your calendar now to make sure you are in compliance.

If you have any questions about completing your school calendar, please contact Marj Beck in our Funding and Disbursement Division at [mbeck@isbe.net](mailto:mbeck@isbe.net) or by calling (217) 782-5256.

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## Illinois Virtual School

### IVS Schedules ‘Planning for Online and Blended Learning Symposium’

Illinois Virtual School will host the “Planning for Online and Blended Learning Symposium” for district superintendents, boards and staff on Feb. 26 in Lisle. The symposium is in partnership with the new Illinois CoSN chapter, Education Technology Council of Illinois, Kane County Regional Office of Education and the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO).

The symposium is designed to assist superintendents, staff and school boards in planning fully online or blended learning solutions for students. John Watson, founder of the Evergreen Education Group, will be the keynote speaker, sharing data and trends regarding online learning. The symposium’s agenda will include:

- Leadership and Policy Panel to discuss Online Learning
- Status of Charter School Commission Report on Virtual Schooling due to the Illinois Legislature March 1, 2014.
- Remote Education Act
- Tools and Strategies to Begin Planning a Local Online/Blended Program.

### “Planning for Online and Blended Learning Symposium”

- **When:** 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 26
- **Cost:** \$50 (includes lunch)

- **Online registration through IASBO:**  
[https://www.iasbo.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?Site=IASBO&WebCode=EventDetail&&evt\\_key=f79b3552-7b82-4f53-89d3-e2e1d087d63c](https://www.iasbo.org/eweb/DynamicPage.aspx?Site=IASBO&WebCode=EventDetail&&evt_key=f79b3552-7b82-4f53-89d3-e2e1d087d63c)
- **Location:** Hilton Lisle/Naperville, 3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle, IL 60532

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## **Funding and Disbursements Division**

### **Final 2012-13 IDEA Room and Board Claim Payment**

The 2012-13 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Room and Board program is now complete. As anticipated and stated in a Nov. 20, 2013, email, final 2012-13 school year claims exceeded the amount of IDEA Room and Board funds available. Proration was calculated at 91.6 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: <http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/sped-rb-history-graph.pdf>.

The final 2012-13 school year voucher was processed by ISBE on Dec. 23 and released by the Office of the Comptroller on Dec. 26.

**2013-14 School Year:** Due to the projected increase of claims and available IDEA funds for the 2013-14 school year, the estimated proration will be approximately 60 percent; therefore, to avoid potential overpayment, submitted monthly claims will be paid at 50 percent during the year. Once all claims are finalized in December 2014, final claims and proration will be calculated and paid at that time. The first voucher for monthly claims submitted for the 2013-14 school year was processed by ISBE on Dec. 23 and released by the Office of the Comptroller on Dec. 26.

If you have questions regarding this information, please contact Marj Beck ([mbeck@isbe.net](mailto:mbeck@isbe.net)) in the Funding and Disbursement Division at (217) 782-5256.

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## **Illinois 5Essentials Survey**

### **Second Annual Survey Set for March 17 Through April 25**

From March 17 through April 25, ISBE will conduct its second 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. Eighty-seven percent of all Illinois schools met the 50 percent participation threshold to receive an Illinois 5Essentials Report in 2012-2013. More than 70 percent of all teachers and students in grades six through 12 across the state took part in the inaugural Illinois 5Essentials Survey last year.

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 2014, 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 June 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 under way to further improve the implementation of the Illinois 5Essentials Survey. These include a pilot in five districts to enhance survey security through use of teacher and student rosters, a review of items for statewide applicability, a research study to examine the use of the survey data across the state, and a research study to examine the relationship between survey results and student test score gains using data from across the state.

ISBE is also soliciting principal and superintendent feedback on the 5Essentials and other statewide initiatives through a survey that will be sent to you via e-mail later this week.

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](mailto:5essentials@uchicago.edu) or by phone at (866) 440-1874.

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## Assessment

### 2014 Illinois Alternative Assessment Training Modules

The 2014 Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) training modules and PowerPoints are now available on the IAA webpage: [www.isbe.net/assessment/iaa.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/iaa.htm). These modules are designed to provide detailed training information on coordinator and teacher responsibilities of the IAA. These modules are pre-recorded webinars to allow viewing at your convenience.

#### For IAA Coordinators:

- Participation Guidelines
- SchoolSuccess for Coordinators
- Packaging and Distribution

#### For IAA Teachers:

- Participation Guidelines
- SchoolSuccess for Teachers
- Test Administration

Questions regarding participation and test administration should be directed to Jessica Dare at [jdare@isbe.net](mailto:jdare@isbe.net) or by calling the Assessment Division at (866) 317-6034.

Questions regarding Assessment Network, SchoolSuccess, and packaging and distribution of test materials should be directed to [iaa\\_pearson@support.pearson.com](mailto:iaa_pearson@support.pearson.com) or by calling the Illinois Customer Support Center at (888) 705/9413.

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## Nutrition and Wellness Programs

### U.S. Department of Agriculture Adopts Final Rule on NSLP Changes

On Jan. 2, 2014, the U.S. Department of Agriculture published a Final Rule in the Federal Register that makes permanent the flexibility that State agencies should consider any SFA compliant with the daily and weekly ranges for grain and meat/meat alternates if documentation is compliant with the daily and weekly minimums.

In addition, this final rule allows frozen fruit with added sugar to be offered within the meal pattern. Under both flexibilities, the meal pattern still requires the menu to be in compliance with the nutrient standards, including the minimum and maximum calories, saturated fat and trans fat for SY2013-2014. Beginning with SY2014-2015, the sodium standard is required. This Final Rule is effective March 4, 2014.

Guidance materials will be updated in the near future to reflect this permanent change. To review the complete final rule, visit the USDA's website at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2013-341030P.pdf>.

Please direct any questions to the School-Based Child Nutrition Programs staff at (800) 545-7892 or via email at [cnp@isbe.net](mailto:cnp@isbe.net).

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## Center for Innovation and Improvement

### Family Engagement Resources and Evidence-Based Practices in the Field

ISBE has designed a Family Engagement Framework Guide, which is a tool for districts and schools to use in developing and expanding school-family partnerships to support improved student learning and healthy development outcomes.

This resource brings together research, promising practices and a consolidation of key program requirements to provide districts, schools and families with tools to assist with the planning, implementation, and evaluation of family engagement practices. More specifically, the guide helps districts, schools and communities with: developing common language for family engagement; improving coordination within systems, communities, districts, and schools; and strengthening capacity to leverage resources and partnerships.

On Thursday, Jan. 30, 2014, from 10 to 11 a.m. CST, ISBE will host a webinar that will provide a general overview of the Family Engagement Framework Guide. The guide was developed by an ISBE cross-divisional team and in partnership with the American Institutes for Research as well as the Academic Development Institute (ADI).

Representatives from ADI and ISBE will be co-facilitating the webinar. Space is limited. Register at <http://www.illinoisparents.org>.

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## Special Education Services

### Sign Up for ‘Assistive Technology for General and Special Needs Classrooms’

“Assistive Technology for General and Special Needs Classrooms” is scheduled for 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Wednesday, March 19, in Rockford. This mini-conference will share tools to benefit a wide range of students with special needs.

Many of the sessions are hands-on; bring an iPad and/or laptop to fully experience these interactive sessions. Schools are encouraged to send teams to take full advantage of the variety of sessions.

For complete details, registration information, and full session descriptions, go to <http://bit.ly/15xdxoK>.

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## English Language Learning Division

### Applications Available for Summer Migrant Education Services Funding

ISBE’s English Language Learning Division is accepting applications for FY14 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 <http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/pdfs/20-37A-migrant-summer-app.pdf>. The deadline for submission is Monday, March 17, 2014.

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 due to economic necessity across state or school district lines with a parent or guardian or on their own to obtain temporary or seasonal work in agricultural production, fishing or food processing industries. A certified recruiter must document that children qualify as migrant students. ISBE can assist districts in identifying eligible migrant children. To request assistance or for more information, contact Beth Robinson at [berobins@isbe.net](mailto:berobins@isbe.net) or (312) 814-3850.

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## Illinois Student Assistance Commission

### Session Proposals Sought for 2014 College Changes Everything Conference

The 2014 College Changes Everything Conference will be held July 17 at the Tinley Park (Ill.) Convention

Center. The proposal form is available online at <http://www.collegechangeseverything.org/>.

Interest sessions are scheduled for one hour. A projector will be provided for presentations; presenters will need to bring their own laptop computer. Presentations will need to be submitted one week prior to the conference. Presentations using video/audio will need to provide their own equipment.

**Deadline:** Completed session proposal forms need to be submitted to the Conference Planning Committee by March 3 by emailing the form to [isac.collegechangeseverything@isac.illinois.gov](mailto:isac.collegechangeseverything@isac.illinois.gov).

**Non-Commercial Policy:** Please note that sessions are to be non-commercial forums. Individuals should refrain from using brand names or endorsing specific products. Sessions are not to be used as a place for direct promotion of a product or service.

**Presenter Compensation:** The College Changes Everything Conference does not provide any compensation for individuals accepted to serve as conference presenters. This includes compensation for travel-related expenses and hotel accommodations.

Questions about the conference or session should be sent to [isac.collegechangeseverything@isac.illinois.gov](mailto:isac.collegechangeseverything@isac.illinois.gov).

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## Upcoming Events

### Registration Under Way for Annual Statewide ESEA/NCLB Conference

Register now for the annual Statewide ESEA/NCLB Conference, “Preserving Our Learning Space: Creative Teaching Within the Common Core,” which is set for Feb. 18-20 at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers.

This year’s program puts emphasis on comprehensive school improvement, including evidence of school turnarounds and transformations, implementation of Common Core standards in Math and English Language Arts, Early Childhood Education, Homeless Education, the integration of assessment into teaching strategies, and much more.

Outstanding keynote speakers, including Ruby Payne, Linda Gojak, Tyler DeWitt, Samuel Betances and others will focus on topics such as understanding poverty and diversity in relation to classroom strategy, national trends in math instruction, best practices in teaching

STEM subjects, and the strengthening of creativity and professionalism among teachers. More than 200 highly informative breakout sessions will also be offered.

Information about registration can be found at [http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/pages/f\\_events-nclb.html](http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/pages/f_events-nclb.html).

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## In Brief

### Professional Development

- The Pathways Resource Center of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will present a workshop for middle level and high school leaders called **“Building Student Success Through Individualized Learning Plans”** Jan. 30 in Bloomington and Jan. 31 in Naperville. The cost is \$60, which will be waived for educators from Race to the Top districts. Register at [http://pathways.illinois.edu/?page\\_id=1206](http://pathways.illinois.edu/?page_id=1206).
- The Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Chicago and the Epilepsy Resource Center of Central Illinois will host a free **Training for School Nurses on Seizures and Epilepsy Management** with a bonus piece on Concussion Management from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 8. For more information, visit <http://www.epilepsy-chicago.org/2014/01/02/managing-students-with-seizures-training-for-school-nurses-5/>.
- **Illinois Reads** is statewide reading initiative that will be launched on March 12 by the Illinois Reading Council. Jesse White, the Illinois State Librarian, has agreed to be the honorary chair. The Illinois Reads concept is to encourage Illinoisans to read books by Illinois authors. For more information or to become an Illinois Reads Ambassador, visit [www.illinoisreads.org](http://www.illinoisreads.org) or call (888) 454-1341.
- The Illinois Reading Council is planning the 46th annual **Illinois Reading Council Conference** March 13-15 in Springfield. The conference will feature many well-known authors, nationally recognized reading professionals and Illinois educators that will be presenting over 400 breakout sessions. For more information, visit [www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org](http://www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org) or call (888) 454-1341.

### In the News

- Rebecca Wattleworth, a math and science teacher at Warrensburg-Latham High School in Warrensburg, has been selected as a **Hope Street Group 2014 National Teacher Fellow**. She is one of only 13 educators nationwide to be invited to participate in this fellowship program and is this year’s representative from Illinois. To read more go to

<http://www.hopestreetgroup.org/news/releases/hope-street-group-announces-2014-class-national-teacher-fellows>.

### District Opportunities

- The Education Division of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago administers the **Visiting Chinese Language Teachers From Taiwan Program**, which assists districts in recruiting Chinese language teachers. Contact John Lin at (312) 616-0805 or [johnlin@edutw.org](mailto:johnlin@edutw.org) for more information or visit the Education Division online at <http://www.taiwanembassy.org/US/CHI/ct.asp?xItem=12968&CtNode=2525&mp=27&xpl>.

### Student Opportunities

- The state of Florida is planning an academic tournament for students across the U.S. The **National Tournament of Academic Excellence** is set for June 14-16 in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Teams of six students in grades 9-12 with a coach will compete against other states, the District of Columbia, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands. For more information, visit <http://www.academic-challenge.org/ntae/index.html>.
- The Community Foundation for the Land of Lincoln administers the **World War II Descendants Statewide Scholarship** for high school seniors. The deadline is March 1. For more information visit <https://www.scholarselect.com/scholarships/13978-2014-world-war-ii-illinois-descendants-scholarship>.
- The **Rural Rental Housing Association of Illinois – Barbara Carpenter Memorial Scholarship** goes to high school students who reside in apartments developed and financed under the USDA Section 515 Program and owned and/or managed by members of the Rural Rental Housing Association of Illinois. Visit <https://www.scholarselect.com/scholarships/13821-2014-rural-rental-housing-association-of-il---barbara-carpenter-memorial-scholarship>.
- The American Bar Association Young Lawyers Division is sponsoring the **2014 Law Day Art Contest** for students in grades 9-12. Group and individual entries are welcome. This year’s theme is “American Democracy and the Rule of the Law: Why Every Vote Matters.” The deadline to enter is March 7. For details, visit [www.ambar.org/lawday](http://www.ambar.org/lawday).

### Employment Opportunities

- An **External Vacancy List for ISBE** is available at <http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm>.