



Weekly Message

Feb. 3, 2015

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week we sent all districts a letter reminding you of the state and federal laws in place that require all districts to administer the PARCC assessment to third- through eighth-graders and once in high school, with the exception of those students who are legally exempt. Our letter outlined the possible sanctions the U.S. Department of Education could impose should we fall below the 95 percent threshold and not take any actions to prevent this from happening, as well as our own responsibility as the State Education Agency to also levy sanctions should a district refuse to administer the test. Our Board discussed this issue during our January meeting and members agreed that we must reiterate the message of the U.S. DOE's December [letter](#), which we shared here early last month and which confirms there is no flexibility under current laws.

We'd remind districts that aside from the possibility of these state and federal sanctions, we believe this will be a high-quality assessment instrument that is both valid and reliable. Kindergarten teachers through college-level professors from across the country, including Illinois, were among those who helped develop this new assessment to measure a broad range of knowledge and skills, such as problem-solving and critical thinking, that are essential for success. The PARCC assessment also measures writing at all grade levels, a valuable indicator of college and career readiness and a skill that was only assessed intermittently and for certain grade levels on previous state tests.

Do we want our students to demonstrate they can solve real-world problems? Do we want them to use critical thinking skills to solve problems? Or to read and write critically? We all know it's impossible to obtain good information about what our students know and can do with the multiple choice assessments we have used in the past. It is time to employ better tools that will provide solid feedback on student growth. Any time we transition to a new system we will learn what works and what doesn't and together we will make adjustments along the way.

Furthermore, many of us remember when a point-in-time test was used to determine how our schools were doing. We knew that more comprehensive information and measures of growth were needed. We now have the opportunity for a state assessment to provide that information. We may also recall a time when all students were not included in assessment and reporting, which could allow achievement gaps to grow while unchecked. Our state Report Card and growth measures now more accurately demonstrate the progress our schools are delivering and the PARCC assessments will contribute to our goal of rendering a more complete picture of student and school performance.

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We have had several districts request more time to transition to paper-and-pencil tests and I want to honor those requests. If you have a desire to move to a paper-and-pencil test vs. online for this year, please contact Dan Brown in our Assessment Division at (866) 317-6034 **no later than this Friday, Feb. 6.**

Finally, I want to congratulate Highland Elementary School in Skokie School District 68 and HH Conrady Junior High School in North Palos School District 117, which will be among schools honored for serving students in poverty and achieving academic success during the National Title I Association's annual conference this week in Utah as well as during our own statewide Lead, Focus, Connect Conference in Chicago.

Have a great week!
Chris

Upcoming ISBE Dates and Deadlines

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

- **Third annual Illinois 5Essentials survey administration** – Jan.12-March 13(<http://illinois.5-essentials.org>)
- **TECH 2015 application deadline** – Feb. 3 (www.iceberg.org/tech_2015)
- **Annual No Child Left Behind Conference** – Feb. 3-5 (www.thecenterweb.org/nclb/)
- **School district annual financial report review process deadline** – Feb. 6 (www.isbe.net/sfms/afr/verification.htm)
- **ISBE offices closed for Lincoln's Birthday** – Feb. 12
- **Annual "Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance" due to ISBE** – Feb. 13
- **ISBE offices closed for Presidents' Day** – Feb. 16
- **Part 25 (Educator Licensure), Part 33 (Programs for the Preparation of Superintendents in Illinois), Part 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant) and Part 252 (Driver Education)** – Public comment period ends Feb. 17
- **Illinois Social Science Standards Revision Task Force meeting** – March 6
- **2015 Illinois Arts Education Week** – March 16-22
- **Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) testing window** – March 23-May 1
- **Part 650 (Charter Schools) and Part 1105 (Procurement by the State Board of Education)** – Public comment period ends March 23
- **Eighth annual Illinois School Wellness Conference** – April 23
- **TECH 2015 student showcase** – May 7
- **ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day** – May 25
- **Deadline to submit nomination forms for the 2016 Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year program** – June 8 (www.isbe.net/those-who-excel/pdfs/those-who-excel-app.pdf)
- **Deadline to submit data in the Student Health Data –Vision system** - June 30
- **ISBE offices closed for Independence Day** – July 3
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in fall 2015** – Friday, Aug. 14, 2015 (See www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm for public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)

Early Childhood

State Superintendent Koch Announces New KIDS Implementation Plan

Kindergarten is a critical link between a child's first five years, when 90 percent of brain development occurs, and the beginning of the K-12 educational journey toward college and career readiness. Studies have shown that by kindergarten, the achievement gap is already present and often widens over time. The state's early childhood system seeks to target and tailor services to close achievement gaps early and implement birth-to-grade 3 alignment strategies that will maintain early gains. As we continue to develop an aligned, data-driven educational pipeline that will support each and every child in achieving college and career readiness, it is important for the state to have data across the continuum to track the progress of children and respond accordingly.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has been working with piloting school districts and education stakeholders to review, analyze and develop a strategy regarding implementation of the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS). The purpose of this initiative is to capture statewide data on the school readiness of kindergartners, a milestone toward college and career readiness. KIDS data is a tool for parents, districts, local communities and the state to develop responsive policies to support school readiness. The data can also be integrated into existing instruction, assessment and reporting systems to inform instruction and meet other local purposes.

As we have worked with stakeholders and the piloting districts, concerns have been raised with the initial implementation plan for the KIDS assessment. In response, we have modified the implementation plan. ISBE will partner with education partners this spring to raise awareness and provide support to local districts. The state will move toward collecting and reporting school readiness data for all kindergartners over the next three school years.

- Year One: Awareness, Planning and Training (2015-16)
 - Raise awareness with parents, teachers and administrators

- Begin planning with instructional teams to review existing assessments and reports and plan for training
- Teacher, administrator and coach training
- Districts may choose to begin partial implementation with some teachers
- Year Two: Partial Implementation (2016-17)
 - Administration of the instrument utilizing flexibility options:
 - Using only a subset of core domains, reducing the number of measures
 - Implementing with a subset of students
 - Districts may choose to begin full implementation
- Year Three: Full Implementation (2017-18)
 - Collecting and reporting school readiness data for all kindergartners
 - Training new teachers and supporting existing teachers
 - Allowing school districts to report school readiness data utilizing approved alternative kindergarten readiness assessments

Through close collaboration with our partners at WestEd, we have used the pilot years to learn more about meeting the needs of schools and districts. In response, there have been improvements to the instrument, modifications to the administration requirements and a new project to show clear alignment to attainment of state standards. This new implementation plan is the next step in tailoring KIDS to meet the needs of our state. The KIDS instrument is provided to the field as a developmentally appropriate school readiness instrument with no direct per-child cost. In response to feedback from school districts, ISBE will work with education stakeholders to explore additional school readiness instruments, including PARCC K-2 assessments, which meet state goals. This spring, ISBE will provide all school districts with a KIDS Implementation Toolkit and begin engaging each in the planning process.

For more information, please visit www.illinoiskids.org or email kids@isbe.net.

Standards and Assessments

PARCC Test Administrator Walkthrough Webinar Scheduled for Feb. 10

A webinar is scheduled for Feb. 10 to provide information for Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test administrators and proctors, with an emphasis on online administration.

ISBE staff will walk through several aspects of the test administration manual, discuss the use of PearsonAccess Next and TestNav8 and answer questions from participants. This webinar is intended as a supplement to local test administration trainings.

The webinar is intended for test administrators, proctors and test coordinators, particularly those administering the online version of the test.

After registering, participants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

- **Title:** Test Administrator and Proctor Webinar
- **Date:** Feb. 10
- **Time:** 3:30 p.m.
- **Register:**
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5190891515418412034>

Follow-up to Infrastructure Trial Debrief Webinar Scheduled for Feb. 4

A webinar is scheduled for Feb. 4 as a follow-up to the Infrastructure Trial Debrief webinar held on Jan. 16.

ISBE staff will report back on some findings and updates regarding the issues posted by districts. A representative from Pearson will also be on hand to answer questions.

The webinar is open to all but may be especially useful to technology coordinators.

After registering, participants will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

- **Title:** Follow-up to Infrastructure Trial Debrief webinar
- **Date:** Feb. 4
- **Time:** 3 p.m.
- **Register:**
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5194374768744910338>

Illinois Learning Standards

New Physical Development and Health Standards to be Implemented in 2015-16

The revised Illinois Learning Standards for Physical Development and Health are ready for implementation during the 2015-16 school year.

We know that healthy minds and bodies are basic to academic success and later in life enhance the ability to contribute to a productive work environment. In order to increase physical education's return on investment for learning and health, [Public Act 97-1102](#) created the [Enhance P.E. Task Force](#) (EPETF). Co-chaired by State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch and Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, director of the Department of Public Health, the task force convened [more than 30 school, physical education and health experts and stakeholders](#) from across the state.

Per its charge, the task force proposed [revisions to Goals 19-24](#) of the Illinois Learning Standards for Physical Development and Health, [moving from traditional P.E. to enhanced P.E.](#), including the addition of two new standards that incorporate the latest research and best practices for achieving optimal student health and academic achievement. One proposed new standard covers advocating for the health of individuals, families and communities and another calls for explaining the structures and functions of the brain and how they are affected by different physical activities and fitness levels. In addition to the task force's expertise, the revisions were reviewed by more than a dozen experts across Illinois. Learning standards are set at the state level while districts then write curricula to meet the standards.

During the 2014-15 school year, districts are planning for and phasing in implementation of the new

standards to be ready for full implementation of the standards in the 2015-16 academic year.

For more information, view the [Overview of new Learning Standards for Physical Education Requirement webinar](#) and/or [Tips for Implementing the New Learning Standards for Physical Development and Health webinar](#). The Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (IAPHERD) also has a [comprehensive website](#) to assist with implementation of the new learning standards for enhance P.E.

IL Social Science Standards Revision Task Force Meeting March 6 in Normal

Social studies teachers, department chairs, district-wide curriculum directors and related educational organizational representatives are invited to attend the Illinois Social Science Standards Revision Task Force meeting on March 6 at the Bloomington-Normal Marriott in Normal.

The meeting is scheduled for 1 to 4 p.m. Participants will provide their feedback on the task force's draft standards.

Please contact Tara Bell at tbell@isbe.net for additional information and to RVSP your attendance.

Nutrition and Wellness Programs

School Nutrition Industry Conference Coming to Springfield & Lisle

ISBE, the Illinois School Nutrition Association (ILSNA) and the Illinois Industry Advisory Board invite school staff to attend the upcoming 2015 School Nutrition Industry Conference (SNIC), which will be held at two locations this year.

This program is a professional development opportunity offered jointly by ILSNA and ISBE. The theme for the 2015 SNIC will be "Back to Basics," and the event will include new food products and technology to simplify the food service operation as well as food service equipment.

SNIC 2015 will first be held on Feb. 24 in Springfield at the Crowne Plaza Springfield and then on Feb. 25 in Lisle at the Hilton Lisle/Naperville.

Participants should complete their registration information for one of the event locations online at <http://events.r20.constantcontact.com/register/event?oeidk=a07eaatexq0e883f451&llr=te5dkreab>.

Attendees will receive four continuing education units (CEU). There is no charge for ILSNA members, and the non-member registration fee is \$25.

Contact the ILSNA office at (217) 529-6578 or info@ilsna.net for more information.

Those Who Excel

Illinois Teacher of the Year Steve Elza Available for Speaking Engagements

If you are looking for a dynamic, inspiring speaker, consider Steve Elza, the 2015 Illinois Teacher of the Year.

Steve is an Applied Technology teacher at William Fremd High School in Township High School District 211. He didn't follow the conventional path to becoming a teacher and his experiences of being mentored, and being a mentor, are valuable stories for teachers and students considering teaching as a profession. Steve is a career technical educator and can provide excellent insight into preparing students for rewarding careers.

To request Steve for your next event, please visit <http://adc.d211.org/teacher-of-the-year-steve-elza/> and complete the speaker request form.

State Funding and Forecasting

Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance in IWAS for GSA Claim

The annual "Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance" application is now available on IWAS. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) requests that you provide an estimate of the daily attendance figure for your district to ISBE by Friday, Feb. 13. The daily attendance figure is your estimate of the best three months of attendance for the 2014-15 school year. You may use actual attendance data to date to calculate an estimate or develop your own estimate figure based on historical attendance patterns.

The estimate you provide will be used by policymakers to determine the General State Aid (GSA) appropriation level for the 2014-15 claim payable in fiscal year 2016. Please note these estimates are only used for projection purposes and will not be used in calculating your district's final GSA claim and payment.

Thank you for your time and attention to this data request. If you have questions about this request, please contact Ethelene Ferdinand at eferdina@isbe.net or (217) 782-0249.

Rules and Waivers

Invitation to Comment on Rules

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

Part 650 (Charter Schools): Addresses changes necessitated by recently enacted legislation (P.A. 98-783 and P.A. 98-1048) concerning school closures and material revisions, respectively.

Public comment period ends March 23, 2015.

Part 1105 (Procurement by the State Board of Education): Repeals Part 1105 due to statutory changes that place the State Board of Education under the Chief Procurement Officer for General Services for purposes of procurement.

Public comment period ends March 23, 2015.

English Language Learning

Free Workshop for Educators of English Learners March 10-11 in Normal

A free workshop for educators of English learners, titled "ELD Standards in Action: Unit Planning," is scheduled for March 10-11 in Normal.

Participants will utilize resources from the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment (WIDA) English Language Development (ELD) Standards Framework to plan units of instruction that integrate content and language standards. In school teams, participants will engage in identifying the academic

language demands embedded in state content standards, planning and designing a custom unit of instruction, identifying ways to support and differentiate for language development, and planning and designing methods for formative language assessment. Teams will have ample opportunities for developing materials. Therefore, participants are encouraged to bring curriculum materials and student ACCESS for ELLs scores.

Participants will be able to:

- Discuss how to identify the academic language demands of content standards, such as the Common Core State Standards and the Next Generation Science Standards.
- Explain how to integrate content standards and the WIDA ELD Standards when planning instruction and assessment.
- Formulate a plan for instruction that includes learning goals for both content and language.
- Formulate a plan for assessment for content learning and language development.

Please email Sonia Serrano at DELLregistration@isbe.net to register or ask questions about this workshop.

Student Opportunities

National Youth Science Camp Accepting Applications for Summer 2015 Experience

The National Youth Science Camp is accepting applications from Illinois graduating seniors for an all-expense paid summer 2015 camp experience in West Virginia.

This camp is a residential science education program where students from around the country are challenged academically in exciting lectures and hands-on activities and have opportunities to participate in outdoor adventure programs. The goal of the camp is to gain a deep appreciation for the great outdoors and establish friendships that last a lifetime.

Students may apply online at <http://apply.nysc.org>. Please contact Tara Bell at tbell@isbe.net with any questions.

School Bus Safety Poster Contest

The Illinois Association for Pupil Transportation and the Office of the Secretary of State invite you and your students to participate in the annual School Bus Safety Poster Contest.

The goal of this poster contest is to increase student awareness of school bus safety issues. The contest is open to all students in grades kindergarten through 8 and has four grade divisions.

Winners of the state contest will be awarded cash prizes in denominations of \$75 for first place, \$35 for second place and \$25 for third place.

The state winners will be honored at an awards ceremony hosted by the sponsors in Springfield during National School Bus Safety Week in October.

For contest rules and student guidelines for submitting entries, please visit www.isbe.net/funding/html/bus-safety-contest.htm.

Student Recognition

USS Illinois Submarine Art Contest Winner and Finalists Announced

Christopher M. Durdle of Monmouth Roseville High School in Monmouth submitted the winning design for the crest of the USS Illinois submarine.

Last fall, Illinois high school students were invited to participate in the USS Illinois Contest to design the crest of the state's namesake ship as a symbol of the state, the distinguished crew of this state-of-the-art submarine and Illinois' thousands of dedicated service members and veterans.

The contest's selection committee reviewed 149 entries and had the difficult task of selecting five finalists. The USS Illinois crew viewed and voted on the five finalist entries, and Durdle's submission was the top pick. The other four finalists are:



- Angela M. Anderson, Batavia High School in Batavia
- Hanna J. Frazier, Batavia High School in Batavia
- Jessi M. Karlic, Lincoln-Way West High School in New Lenox
- Cyrena R. Rangel, Danville High School in Danville

The members of the teen class at the Illinois Center for Autism received an honorable mention for their contest entry due to their special capabilities.

A recognition lunch for the five finalists will be held at the Union League Club of Chicago on April 2, and the commanding officer of the USS Illinois will present awards to these students.

The USS Illinois Commissioning Committee and the ship's crew extend their sincere thanks for the hard work and creativity that all entrants put into their designs.

In Brief

Grant Opportunities

- The Coalition of Schools Educating Boys of Color has launched its 2015 **COSEBOC School Awards** program which identifies, recognizes and rewards schools that have a proven track record of success in education boys of color in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade. Award recipients will receive a \$10,000 cash grant. For details, visit <http://coseboc.org/school-awards>. Interested schools must submit their application by Feb. 23.

Student Contests

- The **National Liberty Museum** is holding a speech and essay contest to coincide with the release of the film "Selma." The contest is open to U.S. high school students ages 14 to 18. After viewing "Selma," a Paramount Pictures film about Martin Luther King Jr. and the civil rights movement, contestants will respond to the contest topic with an original 500- to 700-word essay and videotaped speech reading of their essay. Contest prizes include one \$5,000 grand prize. For more details and contest rules, go to

<http://libertymuseumselmacontest.org>. The deadline to enter is Feb. 15.

- The National WWII Museum seeks submissions for its **National 2015 High School Essay Contest** and **2015 Middle School Essay Contest**. This year's essay prompt was inspired by a quote from Ira Hayes, one of the flag-raisers at Iwo Jima, and asks students, "How do you define a hero?" Submissions are due March 31. Winning essays will receive a cash prize. Full contest guidelines and rules are available online at <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/essay-contests/>.
- The **Illinois Heart Rescue Project** invites Illinois high school students to write, edit, produce and upload to YouTube their own 90-second sudden cardiac arrest public service announcement (PSA). The purpose of this competition is to have students create fun and contemporary compression-only CPR videos. The videos will be judged on a local, regional, and state level, and the top three will be posted on YouTube for the entire state to vote on the winner. The top video will be played at major sporting events in the Chicago area. Contest details are available at <http://illinoisheartrescue.com/news/illinois-heart-rescue-sponsors-statewide-high-school-video-public-service-announcement-psa-competition/>. The deadline for video submissions is April 15.

Professional Development

- Registration is open for **Wired Wednesday Webinars**, a unique collaboration that focuses on the Common Core State Standards in speaking and listening. The Illinois Reading Council has partnered with the Wisconsin State Reading Association to provide the webinars. All webinars begin at 7 p.m. For more information or to register, please visit www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org or call (888) 454-1341. Upcoming presenters include:
 - Doug Fisher: Collaborative Conversations and the Speaking and Listening Standards on March 17.
 - Matt Copeland: Facilitating Student Discussion with Socratic Circles on April 15.

Employment Opportunities

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