



# Illinois State Board of Education

Rod R. Blagojevich, Governor

## Weekly Message

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Brenda J. Holmes  
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Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.  
State Superintendent

**February 11, 2008**

### Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week, you may have heard or read about Sebastian Fortson, a six-year-old from the south suburbs whose parents were locked in a residency dispute with Homewood School District 153. It was a case that highlighted an issue that has generated a lot of controversy in the suburbs for many years.

I would like to say thank you to Superintendent Dale Mitchell for his assistance in getting Sebastian back in school. I know that he has a difficult job, as do many superintendents, in balancing the rights of local taxpayers and what is in the best interest of children. I appreciate Superintendent Mitchell working with us to get this student back in school.

I will let the courts decide the legal issue of residency, but Chairman Ruiz and I have discussed this and are eager to meet with suburban administrators to see that this situation is not repeated.

We begin statewide testing with the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) in just a couple weeks, with the early testing window opening on February 25. We have a new assessment feature that was just added last week that I hope teachers, parents and students will find useful. It's an interactive multiple choice test that you can find on the assessment portion of our website or by going directly to <http://metacat2.com/iltestlinks.html>. It provides parents and students with an idea of the kinds of questions to expect on the ISAT, which will, hopefully, relieve some test anxiety and help students to be more confident as they prepare to take the test. Additionally, we are including information in our guidance to address situations in which students experience too much anxiety or frustration. The document is currently being edited and when it is finalized, it will be posted at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/default.htm>.

Finally, I wanted to let you know that we have developed a letter to parents of our English Language Learners that helps to explain to them the changes in the statewide assessment system for the current school year. We have had requests from the field for just such a document, and we developed the letter with feedback from the bilingual community, school administrators and other stakeholder groups. We strongly encourage you to download the letter at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/default.htm> or <http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/default.htm> and send this home to parents of English Language Learners. Feel free to modify the letter and send out as your own. Currently, the letter is written in English and Spanish, but we hope to have it translated into additional languages within the next few days.

Thanks and have a great week.

Chris

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## Upcoming Deadlines

- **Deadline to develop and implement plan to operate summer meals program, if required by PA 95-0155** – February 15, 2008
- **Student applications for National Science Youth Camp** – February 18, 2008
- **Non-Certified Staff Salary Study survey** – February 29, 2008
- **Submit a Letter of Intent for the Move and Crunch Challenge for Principals**, [www.kidseatwell.org](http://www.kidseatwell.org) – February 29, 2008
- **Technology Integration Plan** – March 1, 2008
- **Charter Planning Grant applications & Charter Implementation Grant applications** – April 30, 2008
- **Deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2008** – Friday, August 8, 2008
- **Annual Superintendents' Conference** – Monday, Sept. 29 & Tuesday, Sept. 30, 2008

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## Student Assessment

### ACT Online Prep

We are pleased to announce that the Illinois State Board of Education has entered into an agreement with ACT to provide ACT Online Prep to public high schools in Illinois through May 31, 2009 at no cost to the school or district. The order form to begin receiving ACT Online Prep is available online at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/protocol.htm>.

*This order form should only be used by sites that currently do not have an active ACT Online Prep license.*

If a school currently has an ACT Online Prep license your licenses will be renewed automatically by ACT and will be valid through May 31, 2009. ACT will not issue an invoice for this renewal and you do not need to submit an order form.

ACT Online Prep is an excellent tool for your students and we are excited to provide this service to them. Please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions list also available online at [http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/Online\\_Prep\\_FAQs.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/Online_Prep_FAQs.pdf) contact ACT Customer Services at 800-498-6065 with questions.

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## Rules & Waivers

### Invitation to Comment on Rules

Two sets of proposed rules recently reviewed by the State Board of Education are currently available for public comment. These items have been posted on the agency's web site at [www.isbe.net/rules](http://www.isbe.net/rules); choose "Proposed Rules and Amendments." Please submit any comments or suggestions you may have to [rules@isbe.net](mailto:rules@isbe.net).

**Part 60 (The "Grow Your Own" Teacher Education Initiative)** – Updating to reflect recent statutory revisions.

**Part 575 (School Technology Program)** – Authorization for districts to make partial early repayments of revolving loan funds.

**Deadline for Public Comment: March 25, 2008**

### Notice of Effectiveness of Rulemaking

Please be advised that one rulemaking recently adopted by the State Board is now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency's web site at [www.isbe.net/rules](http://www.isbe.net/rules); choose "Rules Currently in Effect" and scroll to the relevant Part number. If you print the affected Sections, please be sure to include the table of contents, which changes each time a Part is revised.

#### Part 232 (Summer Bridges Program)

- Strengthening accountability and quality assurance with regard to implementation of the program.
- Affected Sections: 232.50 and 232.60.
- Effective Date: January 22, 2008

## School Business & Support Services

### School District Annual Financial Report (ISBE Form 50-35) Verification Process

District Superintendents received an email broadcast asking the district to verify the Operating Expense Per Pupil (OEPP), Per Capita Tuition Charge (PCTC), and the Financial Profile Report on February 5, 2008. The broadcast included links to cover letters, instructions, and definitions to assist with the verification process. These documents are also available on the IWAS website.

The email broadcast and this notice in the Superintendent's bulletin are the only notices provided to the district. If you have not received the broadcast, please contact ISBE at the number below. If you give authority to another person verifying these reports, please forward the email broadcast on to them. It is important that they have the instructions and deadlines to assist them in completing the verification in a timely manner. Once the deadline passes, changes cannot be made to the 2007 Annual Financial Report data.

Since the financial profile designation will be approved and publicly released by ISBE, it is of the utmost importance that you review your financial profile data and score. Any district comments that you want included with your final financial profile report may be entered in the comment box. Although your comments are optional, this is an opportunity for districts to explain financial circumstances. For further information see the following website:

<http://www.isbe.net/sfms/afr/OEPPPCTCICRCoverLetter.pdf>

Any questions regarding this notification or verification process should be directed to School Business Services at 217-785-8779. Any questions regarding IWAS should be directed to the Call Center at 217-558-3600.

### Rule Changes for Illinois Program Accounting For School Districts & Joint Agreements

*(23 Illinois Administrative Code - Parts 100, 110, 125)*

New rules have been enacted that represent a comprehensive updating of the Program Accounting Manual (Part 110), which was last revised in 1994.

While the new text addresses many of the same issues as have always been included, the rules have been streamlined to the extent possible.

The new material is being placed into a new Part 100 with a new, more descriptive title. That new Part will eventually replace both current Part 110 and current Part 125 beginning with the 2008-2009 school year. However, those existing rules will need to be retained through the 2007-2008 school year to allow for planning time and software changes.

- **Part 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing)**  
New rules that will replace Part 110 (Program Accounting Manual) beginning July 1, 2008.
- **Part 110 (Program Accounting Manual)**  
An amendment making clear that the provisions of Part 110 will remain in effect only through June 30, 2008 (after which they will be replaced by the requirements of Part 100).
- **Part 125 (Student Activity Funds and Convenience Accounts)**  
An amendment making clear that the provisions of Part 125 will remain in effect only through June 30, 2008 (after which they will be replaced by the requirements of Part 100).

All ISBE rules are posted on the agency's web site at [www.isbe.net/rules](http://www.isbe.net/rules); choose "Rules Currently in Effect;" then, click on each title to review the complete text. IPAM rule changes, specifically with a summary of the notable changes in the new Part 100, are posted at <http://www.isbe.net/finance/interest.htm> under "Items of Interest".

If you have any questions, please contact **Ken Wargo** or **Lou Ferratier**, School Business Services, at 217-785-8779 or by e-mail [finance1@isbe.net](mailto:finance1@isbe.net).

## Funding & Disbursements

### Application Policy for a Three Year Audit Adjustment Spread

Districts that receive large negative audit adjustments for major programs such as General State Aid, Transportation or Special Education due to audits conducted by the Division of External Assurance may

qualify to have their audit adjustment spread over a period of three years. A district may qualify for a three year audit spread if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Applying the aggregate negative adjustment will put the local education agency's composite fund balance as negative (i.e. O&M, Transportation, Education and Working Cash) per the most recent Annual Financial Report, or;
- The local education agency is designated as "financial watch" on the most recent financial profile, or;
- The local education agency is already operating in a negative composite fund balance, or;
- The local education agency is able to offer evidence that demonstrates that the negative audit will create substantial financial difficulty.

Requests for an audit spread must be received in writing to the Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Funding and Disbursement Services within 10 working days of the date of the audit closing conference for the district. Timely requests are critical as audit application impacts final statewide calculations for the major state programs. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

### **Electronic Grants Management-Budget Summary Enhancement**

A helpful enhancement is now available to the budget summary screen for all grants currently available in the electronic grants management systems. The budget summary enhancement includes a net change amount for each budgeted cell indicated with a plus (+) or minus (-) value. The net change will be displayed below the revised budget amount. The net change amount is calculated by comparing the last approved budget to the most current budget being viewed. This enhancement will assist local education agencies by clarifying budget changes before submitting a budget amendment to ISBE.

### **School Safety and Educational Improvement Block Grant**

Language in the Budget Implementation Bill (BIMP) allows State-recognized, nonpublic schools to qualify for

the School Safety and Educational Improvement Block Grant, provided in Section 2-3.51.5 of the School Code <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/fulltext.asp?DocName=010500050K2-3.51.5>.

Average daily attendance (ADA) data from the prior school year is used to calculate two payments on October 30 and April 30 each year. Beginning with the second payment of this school year, which will be paid out this spring, more than 700 State-recognized, nonpublic schools will be allowed to transmit their ADA from the 2006-07 school year and participate in this program. The FY2008 budget does not include a separate appropriation for these nonpublic schools. Therefore, the \$75 million FY2008 appropriation will be divided among both public and nonpublic schools and public school districts will see an April payment that is less than the one received in October. After the nonpublic attendance data is received and the payment recalculated, you will receive notice of the adjusted payment, probably in mid-April.

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## **Resources for Superintendents**

### **Chart of Deadline Dates**

A chart of deadline dates is now available online at [http://www.isbe.net/pdf/deadline\\_dates.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/pdf/deadline_dates.pdf). The purpose of this chart is to alert district personnel to significant dates for required state information or state processes. The dates noted are "due" dates. When available, a dissemination date is stated. All of the grant applications and Requests for Proposals (RFPs) noted herein are subject to annual appropriations.

### **Annual Superintendents' Conference Dates Announced**

The Illinois State Board of Education will host the **Annual Superintendents' Conference on Monday and Tuesday, Sept. 29 and 30, 2008** ([http://www.isbe.net/supts\\_conf/date\\_saver.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/supts_conf/date_saver.pdf)). This year, the conference will be held at the **Crowne Plaza Springfield**. Information will be posted on our website at [www.isbe.net](http://www.isbe.net) as it becomes available.

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## **Professional Development**

### **14th annual Institute for School and Public Librarians (ISPL)**

The 14th annual Institute for School and Public Librarians (ISPL) has been scheduled for **Sunday, June 8 - Friday, June 13, 2008**. This week of library related



educational programs and activities will be held on the campus of Bradley University in Peoria and is sponsored by the Illinois State Library, in cooperation with Bradley University.

This Institute is an educational, information rich, and very rewarding week. Programs focus on basic skills and knowledge needed by school and public librarians to serve patrons and students. Program topics include reference, collection development, dealing with different personality types, technology issues and trends, grant writing, developing effective patron programming and more. ISPL offers opportunities to gather knowledge and develop job-related skills that will enhance the attendees' abilities to provide better library services for their patrons/students.

Lodging, all meals, handouts, and educational resource materials are provided for the attendees. The only cost incurred by participants is a \$50.00 registration fee. A Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grant covers all additional costs, with funding provided by the Illinois State Library, a Division of the Office of Jesse White, Secretary of State and State Librarian. The State Library administers LSTA grant funding provided by the federal Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS).

Applications should be submitted via fax at 217-782-1877 on or before **Thursday, March 20**. A maximum of 50 school and public librarians will be selected, with the intent of maintaining a balance between the two types of libraries and geographic representation. Attendees will be notified of their selection in April.

Additional information may be obtained from **Ron Winner** or **Karen Egan** at 1-800-665-5576, ext. 1. The announcement and application are located at: [http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/w/hats\\_new/2008institute.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/w/hats_new/2008institute.html).

### **The Ongoing Struggle: Balancing of Students' Education Rights v. Students' Safety**

The Illinois State Bar Association is hosting an upcoming workshop entitled "The Ongoing Struggle: Balancing Students' Education Rights v. Student Safety" on **Friday, Feb. 22** in Hoffman Estates.

The workshop will feature a series of practical constitutional debates between school district attorneys and attorneys who represent student interests. This is going to be a very unique and entertaining event and may be of interest to teachers, administrators and ROEs. Additional information, including registration and fees, is available online at <http://www.isba.org/lawed/2008/studentsrights02/>.

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## **Teacher Resources**

### **Illinois Sustainable Schools Compact**

Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn recently announced a new voluntary program for all Illinois K-12 schools. This new program is called the Illinois Sustainable Schools Compact, featuring a document containing 12 environmentally-friendly practices that schools can do to green school operations, buildings and grounds, and curriculum. The Illinois Sustainable Schools Compact can be viewed as a PDF on the Lieutenant Governor's Green Solutions website at: <http://www.greensolutions.il.gov>.

If your school or school district would like to take this voluntary challenge, print a copy of the compact from the website, check off any number of practices on the list your school can commit to achieving by the end of 2010, and have an appropriate figure of authority, preferably the school principal, sign the compact and mail it to the address below. Please note: your school may check off any of the practices on this list that the school has already or is currently working to achieve. The Lieutenant Governor asks that schools check off at least one goal to participate.

Please encourage your school or district to sign the compact, and contact **Jon Zirkle**, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Pat Quinn, at 312-814-2094 or by e-mail at [Jonathon.Zirkle@illinois.gov](mailto:Jonathon.Zirkle@illinois.gov).

### **Lincoln Library Workshop for Teachers**

President Lincoln invites Illinois teachers to join him for an exciting morning at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield. The event is scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., **Thursday, March 13**.

Join the Illinois Council on Economic Education and the Federal Reserve Banks of Chicago and St. Louis for a

teacher workshop, “Abraham Lincoln and the \$5 Note.” Learn about the newly redesigned \$5 note, being officially unveiled that day. And watch fifth grade students make the first purchase in Illinois with the new \$5 bill – buying from Mr. Lincoln himself!

Teachers who attend this workshop will receive continental breakfast and lunch, lessons and materials for teaching about the new \$5 note and Lincoln, and materials for teaching about money, the Federal Reserve, banking and more. Continuing professional development credit is available.

To register, call or e-mail **Carol Manning** at 217-558-8929 or [carol.manning@illinois.gov](mailto:carol.manning@illinois.gov). Once you are registered, you will receive a confirmation letter, map and parking information. Space is limited.

This workshop is sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, the Federal Reserve banks of Chicago and St. Louis, the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, and the Illinois Council on Economic Education. For a copy of the workshop invitation, go to [http://www.econed-il.org/icee/docs/2008/lincoln\\_flyer.pdf](http://www.econed-il.org/icee/docs/2008/lincoln_flyer.pdf).

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## Grant & Award Opportunities

### Improving Literacy through School Libraries Program Competition

The U.S. Department of Education’s (USDE) Improving Literacy through School Libraries (LSL) Program has announced its 2008 competition focused on providing funding to public local school libraries in districts with 20 percent or more family poverty.

Approximately 18.5 million dollars will be available for funding to public school districts, charter schools or state-administered schools, with an estimated 80 grants to be awarded in this competition. Funds are used to improve reading achievement through updating library collections, expansion of internet connections, purchase of new technology, professional development for library media specialists, and the extension of school library hours.

Applications are due on **Friday, March 7**. The application package can be found on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) along with instructions for registering. If you have any questions, please contact **Dr. Irene Harwarth**, Team Leader, at [irene.harwarth@ed.gov](mailto:irene.harwarth@ed.gov).

### FY2009 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants

Secretary of State and State Librarian Jesse White and the Illinois State Library are pleased to announce that applications are now available for FY2009 Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) grants.

LSTA grants are some of the most popular grants the State Library offers each year, and this year's offerings include several new categories. Information and applications may be found online at [http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/what\\_we\\_do/lsta2009.html](http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/what_we_do/lsta2009.html).

Important dates to remember are **Wednesday, April 2**, the deadline for Letters of Intent to be submitted; and **Monday, May 12**, when the full application must be postmarked or hand delivered to the Illinois State Library.

LSTA grant opportunities are made possible by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to the Illinois State Library.

### History Teacher of the Year

Preserve America and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History is proud to announce the fifth annual History Teacher of the Year Award honoring outstanding teachers of American History across the country.

To nominate a teacher send an email to [moses@gilderlehrman.org](mailto:moses@gilderlehrman.org) with the teacher’s name, school and a short paragraph describing why the teacher is exceptional. Winners are selected from each of the fifty states, the District of Columbia, the Department of Defense schools and US Territories. Each winner receives \$1,000.00 and a collection of history books and educational resources is donated to his or her school’s library. These state winners become finalists for the National History Teacher of the Year. This program is sponsored by Preserve America and the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History.

Guidelines can be found on the Illinois State Board of Education’s website at <http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/Default.htm>. For more information please visit [www.gilderlehrman.org/teachers/student8.html](http://www.gilderlehrman.org/teachers/student8.html) or contact

**Mike Hatfill**, Curriculum & Instruction, at 217-557-7323 or by e-mail at [dhatfill@isbe.net](mailto:dhatfill@isbe.net). All nominations are due by **Monday, March 17**. All teacher applications are due by **Thursday, May 15**. Mail to Illinois State Board of Education, attention Mike Hatfill, Curriculum and Instruction, 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777.

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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/2008/newsclips/080208.htm>.

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