



Feb. 14, 2011

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week the College Board released their seventh annual AP Report to the Nation and the results are very promising for Illinois students. A record number of Illinois students took AP exams in 2010, more than doubling the percent taking exams in 2001 and nearly twice as many seniors posted a successful score on an AP exam than those graduating 10 years ago.

Illinois is among the top half of the nation with more than 17 percent of our students scoring a 3 or higher. In addition, we're seeing growth across all demographic categories in the number of students participating in AP.

I am proud to see more students asserting themselves and taking these challenging courses. The AP curriculum helps to better prepare our students for their futures after graduation and builds upon our goals of preparing all students for success in college and careers. You can access Illinois specific information from the AP Report to the Nation, including maps showing district participation and performance at http://www.isbe.net/news/2011/feb9.htm.

The snow and fierce arctic temperatures have played havoc with schedules, with some schools taking as many as 10 or more emergency days already. I know this has caused some concerns about ISAT testing windows, which are scheduled to begin next week.

Given the unforeseen circumstances we will allow schools to begin their two-week test window one week later than originally scheduled. This applies to all windows, early, regular and late and districts must still complete their testing within a two-week timeframe. This change only applies to ISAT, 2011 tests scheduled for IAA and PSAE remain unchanged. Additional guidance on this change can be found on our website at http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2011/isat/snow_days_2011.pdf.

I also wanted to share a couple of websites with you. The Center for American Progress has developed a website to measure the educational return on investment of the nation's larger unit districts. They produced an interactive map that looks at education spending per pupil, academic achievement and factored in cost of living, poverty and other factors. They only profiled 358 districts in Illinois but the results are very interesting and I encourage you to take a look at the full report and interactive map at http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2011/01/educational_productivity/report.html.

Finally, the U.S. Department of Education has developed a "dashboard" to show how states compare on various metrics. Of interest is what they chose to compare and how we fare. We are in the top third for a number of metrics but in the bottom third in funding disparity - the variance in amount spent per pupil. You may access the Education Dashboard at http://dashboard.ed.gov/dashboard.aspx.

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Have a great week.

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Econ Illinois' Illinois Personal Finance challenge registration deadline** – Feb. 15
- **Econ Illinois' Economics Challenge registration deadline** – Feb. 15
- **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
- **Parent Involvement as a Collaborative Process** webinar – Feb. 24
- **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Webinar** – Feb. 24
- **PSAE Pre-ID labels sent to ACT for printing** – Feb. 25
- **U.S. Department of Education's Voices in Action: National Youth Summit** – Feb. 26
- **Illinois New Teacher Collaborative's Induction and Mentoring Conference in Springfield** – March 1-2
- **Union League Club of Chicago hosts Lincoln Inaugural Sesquicentennial** – March 4
- **Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth spring conference** – March 10, 11
- **Receipt deadline for ordering PSAE 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

Assessment

Snow Days and the 2011 ISAT Test Windows

The weather has forced many districts in Illinois to use multiple emergency days. In response, ISBE has offered two options:

- 1) Districts and other testing facilities may test on their original two-week window, or
- 2) Districts and other testing facilities may start their two-week testing window one week later than their original test window.

Districts and other testing facilities may choose either option. Details can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2011/isat/snow_days_2011.pdf.

Innovation and Improvement

Final Webinar in Parent Involvement Series Scheduled for Feb. 24

The Illinois State Board of Education's Division of Innovation and Improvement will conclude its Parent Involvement Webinar series this month. The webinars have examined areas of best practices pertaining to Parent Involvement and provided tools and resources for implementing evidence-based strategies.

The webinars have been developed with district staff, school staff, parent facilitators and parents in mind. The first three in the series are now available at <http://illinoisparents.org/> on the "Tool Box" page. Information on the final webinar is given below.

Parent Involvement as a Collaborative Process, 3:30-5 p.m. Feb. 24, 2011: No single person can hum a symphony – it takes a full orchestra to deliver all of the elements that make it a symphony. Student success is much like a symphony in that it depends on several persons coming together in a collaborative spirit to play their part. This webinar will examine three dimensions of Parent Involvement that together build a supportive educational network through intentional collaborative processes. It will offer evidence-based tools, strategies, and resources to help schools develop collaborative relationships with families, other schools, and assist in building positive relationships between families that

support student success. Register at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/276971937>.

Illinois Violence Prevention Authority

Bullying Prevention Grant Program Request for Proposals Announced

The Illinois Violence Prevention Authority (IVPA) has announced the release of a Request for Proposals for the Bullying Prevention Grant Program.

The RFP for the FY 11 Bullying Prevention Grant is available at <http://www.ivpa.org>. Public school districts, including alternative schools and charter schools, and non-profit and/or tax exempt organizations are eligible to apply for 12 month grants (April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012) for up to \$15,000 to implement school-based bullying prevention programs for students in grades K-12, and training of school personnel and parents on bullying prevention.

IVPA will host a Bidders Conference Call at 1 p.m. Feb. 17. The Bidders Conference will provide participants with an overview of the Bullying Prevention Grant Program, the RFP and budget requirements. The Bidders Conference is not mandatory, but it is recommended for organizations interested in applying for the grant. See the RFP for details.

A PowerPoint for the Bidders Conference will be available at the website on Feb. 16. For questions about IVPA or the RFP, contact Sara Moffitt at 312-814-8261 or sara.moffitt@illinois.gov.

Funding and Disbursement Services

Teachers Retirement System 2010-11 Employer Contribution Rates Adjusted

The Employer TRS (Teachers Retirement System) contribution on federally-funded salaries has been adjusted due to Public Act 96-1511. The Teachers Retirement System was required to recertify the appropriation amount to TRS from the state of Illinois for fiscal year 2011. The required 2010-11 state funding rate recertified by the TRS Board of Trustees is 23.10 percent. As a result, the employer TRS contributions on salaries paid from federal funds for the 2010-11 school year has changed from 25.12 percent to 23.10 percent. This change is retroactive to July 1, 2010.

2009-10 Federal Grants (FY 2010)

Local education agencies (LEAs) with approved 2009-10 Federal grants need to revise their FY 2010 final expenditure reports submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education if the following conditions exist:

1. The federally-funded TRS rate was paid for those salaries AFTER July 1, 2010, and
2. The higher rate was charged to the grant and reported on the final Fiscal Year 2010 expenditure report.

Please send an e-mail to the appropriate contact person listed below in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services and request that they remove the final expenditure report indicator so that a revision can be transmitted due to the TRS rate change. The reduction will result in a greater carryover amount into FY 2011 projects that allow carryover. Please include in the e-mail, the Project Number (fiscal year, program code AND the Region-County-District-Type code).

2010-11 Federal Grants (FY 2011)

LEAs with approved 2010-11 Federal grants may have to submit an amendment if the difference of the TRS rate is needed for another expenditure and the additional expenditure is greater than the allowed variance of 20 percent or \$1,000, whichever is greater. An amendment is NOT required if the only change is to adjust the rate as described in the breakdown/budget details.

For further information regarding this change in the law, please communicate with TRS, via e-mail at employers@trs.illinois.gov or call (888) 877-0890.

If a specific program is not listed or further information is needed regarding expenditure report and/or budget amendment changes, please call the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

- Title I, Title I Neglected, Delinquent, School Improvement: Diann Gragg, dgragg@isbe.net
- Title IIA, IID, IV, 21st Century: Ernie Barrow, ebarrow@isbe.net
- IDEA Flow Through and Preschool, Special Ed Discretionary: Sharon Conrath, sconrath@isbe.net
- Title III (LIPLP, IEP), Migrant: Judy Conboy, jconboy@isbe.net
- Perkins Secondary, State Leadership: Jodi Whitlow, jwhitlow@isbe.net
- Even Start, McKinney Homeless: Jamie Johnson, jjohnson@isbe.net

Illinois Emergency Management Agency

Severe Weather Preparedness Week Set to Kick Off on Feb. 28

There are a number of severe weather hazards that affect Illinois, including thunderstorms, tornadoes, lightning, floods and flash floods, damaging winds and large hail. Severe weather hazards can cause extensive property damage, injury or death.

A copy of the Severe Weather Preparedness Booklet and more information will be available on the IEMA website soon. Go to <http://www.iema.illinois.gov>.

School Business Services

School District Annual Financial Report Review Process Reminder

All district superintendents should have received an e-mail broadcast asking the district to review their preliminary Financial Profile Report. This is a reminder if district administration would like to submit comments regarding their district's finances that will be published along with their Financial Profile Report, the comments must be submitted no later than Tuesday, Feb. 15, 2011.

The broadcast included links to the memorandum, instructions and definitions to assist with the review process. These documents are also available in IWAS and on the School District Financial Profile Score Information webpage.

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

The financial profile will be adjusted to incorporate mandated categorical aid payments due to school districts that were not paid by June 30, 2010.

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

Early Childhood

Webinar on Preschool for All FY 12 Competitive Application Process

The registration link for the Preschool for All FY12 Competitive Application Process webinar is <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/178406536>. Space is limited for the webinar, which is set for 10 a.m. to noon CST on Thursday, Feb. 17.

This webinar provides guidance and instruction for completing a proposal for Preschool for All funding for FY 12. After registering, you will receive a confirmation e-mail containing information about joining the webinar.

Only school districts and agency/entities that were eligible for funding in FY 10 and/or FY 11 and are currently in good standing may submit a proposal for funding in FY 12. Funding for parental training will not be available. If you have questions, contact the Early Childhood Division at 217-524-4835.

English Language Learning

FY 12 ELL Programs Consolidated Application and Workshops

The FY12 ELL Enrollment Summary and Ceiling Calculator for this year will incorporate several components in addition to what was collected in the FY11 application. This includes staff qualifications and assignments; program models for each attendance center; and the Immigrant Education Program (IEP) private school student count.

In light of these additions, the Division of English Language Learning (DELL) has scheduled a series of training workshops to provide guidance for districts in accessing and completing Part 1 of the FY12 consolidated application. Please visit <http://www.isbe.net/bilingual> under "Hot Topics" for more information.

New TBE/TPI program directors or anyone with additional questions who may have participated in training provided for the completion of the FY11

consolidated application are strongly encouraged to attend.

If you have any question(s), please contact the Division of English Language Learning at 312-814-3850.

- Part 1 of the FY12 Consolidated Application, the Enrollment Summary and Ceiling Calculator, will be posted online through IWAS on or before Feb. 15, 2011. The ELL Enrollment Summary and Ceiling Calculator are due March 18, 2011.
- Part 2 of the FY12 Consolidated Application, the TBE/TPI and Title III Application, will be posted online through IWAS May 1, 2011, and is due June 30, 2011. Any district applying for federal Title III funds must submit applications by this deadline to be considered for federal Title III funding.

Charter schools

Winter Charter School Design Institute Scheduled for Feb. 25-26

Registration is open for the Illinois Network of Charter Schools' Winter Charter School Design Institute, which will be held Feb. 25-26 at Southland College Prep Charter High School in Matteson.

The two-day event will feature tours and training and presentations from charter school experts. Institute topics include charter design and the application process, financial planning for charter schools, building community and district support and more.

The registration fee is \$250 per attendee. Additional attendees from the same charter design team receive a \$50 discount. All meals are included. Reimbursements for transportation and lodging are available depending on distance of travel for event.

Visit http://incschools.org/start_a_charter.html to register and for details. The deadline to register is Feb. 18. If you have questions, contact Anne Levy Brown at alevybrown@incschools.org or 312-235-0798, ext. 18.

Illinois Student Assistance Commission

Website Offers Help With College and Career Decisions

Trying to pick a major? Looking for a new career path? The Illinois Student Assistance Commission sponsors a

website that can help point individuals in the right direction.

The What's Next Illinois website, <http://www.whatsnextillinois.org>, offers a variety of assessments to gauge interests in certain careers. The site also offers a wide range of tools for college planning, including help on picking a college and searching for scholarships. Those already in the work force can get tips on transferable skills for new jobs.

Parents, students and others can get started by going to the website above and creating a free account.

ISAC Issues Financial Aid Awareness Month Challenge

February is Financial Aid Awareness Month, and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission is challenging Illinois students and families to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) early, seeking 800,000 completed applications in 2011, an increase of 7 percent over last year. ISAC wants to help your students complete this important step toward college.

ISAC representatives are participating in more than 170 financial aid events throughout the state during the month of February. Highlighting Financial Aid Awareness Month is College Goal Sunday, a series of events that help students and families complete financial aid forms. College Goal Sunday has grown into a nationwide volunteer program. The College Goal Sunday program was created by the Indiana Student Financial Aid Association with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc., and with supplemental support from Lumina Foundation for Education. The locations for local events can be found at <http://www.collegeillinois.org>. Please encourage your students and their families to participate in their local events.

Nutrition

School Garden Grant Deadline Approaching

Feb. 11 is the deadline to submit an application to win a school garden. Two elementary schools in each state will be awarded a garden through the Scholastic and National Gardening Associations and Welch's Harvest Grant.

The winning schools may select from either an outdoor or an indoor garden package. The garden packages

include a variety of tools, seeds and educational materials valued at \$1,000 or \$500. Complete the application at <http://www.scholastic.com/harvest/pdfs/learnmore.pdf>.

Curriculum and Instruction

Deadline Coming Up to Submit New Technology Integration Plan

Several federal and state funding programs for schools and districts in the state of Illinois require an approved Technology Integration Plan (TIP). The Illinois State Board of Education serves as the approving entity of Technology Integration Plans for public schools and/or districts outside of the city of Chicago.

Schools and/or districts with a Technology Integration Plan expiring June 30, 2011, have until 11:59 p.m. Monday, Feb. 28, 2011, to submit a new three-year Technology Integration Plan for FY11 approval. Plans will only be accepted for approval if submitted online, via the proper Illinois Interactive Report Card (iirc) template, available online at <http://iirc.niu.edu>, by the deadline. Districts that are not able to submit a plan by the deadline due to extenuating circumstances must request an extension, in advance of the deadline, by contacting Marica Cullen at mcullen@isbe.net.

Special Notice to Schools and Libraries applying for E-Rate reimbursements and/or discounts only: “Beginning with FY2011, technology plans are required only for Priority 2 services (Internal Connections and Basic Maintenance of Internal Connections).”

Read more about these changes online at <http://www.usac.org/sl/applicants/step02/>. Mid-course corrections in response to an annual review of a currently approved tech plan written to support E-Rate services expiring in 2012 or 2013 must be submitted online no later than 11:59 p.m. Feb. 22, 2011, for review and approval.

Districts are advised to contact their local LTC director for technical assistance as needed. For more info, contact Faith Bishop at 217-557-7323 or fbishop@isbe.net.

Professional Development

Superintendents Offered Opportunity to Attend NSPRA National Seminar

The National School Public Relations Association is offering scholarships for superintendents to attend the

organization’s annual National Seminar. The scholarships cover the cost of registration to the event, which is set for July 10-13 in San Antonio.

Those currently employed as a superintendent of schools or similar education agency are eligible, with preference given to those with less than five years experience as a superintendent. Eligible superintendents have never attended an NSPRA National Seminar or have not attended in the past three years.

For additional information and to register, go to http://www.nspr.org/files/docs/Supt%20scholarship%20form%2011_0.pdf. The application deadline is April 8. For questions about the scholarships, which are sponsored by Edline (<http://www.edline.com>), call 301-519-0496 or e-mail ewillis@nspra.org.

Illinois Coalition for Educating At Risk Youth Spring Conference Coming Up

The Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth (ICEARY) will hold its spring conference March 10 and 11 in Bloomington. Keynote speakers are Craig Zablocki (<http://www.craigzablocki.com>) and Debbie Silver (<http://www.debbiesilver.com>). Registration forms for ICEARY 2011: SOS – Save Our Students can be found at <http://www.iceary.org>.

Third Annual Sustainable Schools Symposium Scheduled for April 1

The Governor and Lt. Governor's Offices invite attendees, sponsors and exhibitors to the third annual Sustainable Schools Symposium. The Illinois Green Governments Coordinating Council, Chicago Public Schools Environmental Affairs and the Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences in Chicago will host the symposium on Friday, April 1.

Speakers and workshops will cover topics such as sustainable school facility planning, green facilities management, sustainable renovation and construction, energy efficiency and conservation, environmental education and service learning, water conservation, waste reduction and sustainable school transportation.

The symposium is free but requires participants to register online in advance at <http://admin.usgbc-chicago.org/widget/calendar?eventId=271493&EventViewMode=EventDetails>. Visit the website for additional information, including exhibitor, presenter and sponsorship details.

Student Opportunities

Taiwan Ministry of Education Announces Scholarship Programs

The Taiwan Ministry of Education is offering two scholarship programs. The first, known as the Taiwan Scholarship, is offered to students who wish to enroll in a degree program in Taiwan. Recipients also can enroll in the Language Enrichment Program, which is taken a year prior to the regular program. The second program, the Huayu Enrichment Scholarship, is for students who wish to study Chinese.

Interested students must submit required documents by March 31. For more details and application forms, visit <http://www.edutw.org/english/scholarships/index.html>. Contact the Cultural Division of the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago at 312-616-0805 or info@edutw.org.

Entries Sought for Annual World School Children's Art Exhibition

The 42nd World School Children's Art Exhibition is scheduled for Aug. 25 to Sept. 27, with the deadline for entries set for April 20. The exhibition is organized by the Association for Education Through Art and the Association of Formative Art Education of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

In previous years, more than 70 countries and territories have participated in the annual event. Students ages 6 to 15 are eligible. For more information, call (312) 616-0805 or e-mail info@edutw.org. The rules can be downloaded at <http://ed.arte.gov.tw>.

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>.

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/110214.htm>.