



Illinois State Board of Education

Weekly Message

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Melinda A. LaBarre

Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Later this month we will submit our application for a waiver from some requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) or the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). Under Illinois' plan, we will still maintain a stringent accountability system for schools and districts, however, our proposal moves away from a one-size-fits-all approach to a differentiated system that rewards districts and schools for making progress. If approved, our NCLB waiver will give schools and districts relief from mandates that are arbitrarily assigned as a result of the number of years of not making Adequate Yearly Progress.

We have developed our waiver with significant collaboration and feedback from Illinois citizens. The ISBE led 25 meetings across the state since the fall, with two additional meetings scheduled. Several hundred individuals and multiple stakeholder groups representing parents, teachers, administrators and civil rights organizations provided input and support as we developed our plan.

We have posted a draft of the ESEA flexibility waiver on our website for public comment, which you can access at http://www.isbe.net/nclb_waivers/default.htm#new. This is a dialogue that continues to be fluid and our Board will meet Feb. 21 to discuss the waiver before we submit it to the U.S. Department of Education.

Next week, Gov. Pat Quinn will introduce his FY 2013 budget. Since the Board made its recommendation to increase the budget, we have been receiving some questions about General State Aid. The Board specifically recommended an overall increase to GSA, however, even if this increase is realized, there will still be a need for pro-ration to the GSA Foundation Level next year as it is not enough to reach a per student level of \$6,119. The Board did not recommend changes to the GSA Foundation Level, which is statutory. Further, there were no recommended changes in how GSA is calculated. There has been an effort to increase transparency about how much schools are actually receiving. It is equally important for you to make sure that legislators understand the amount of money your districts are actually receiving.

Last week, we launched the Illinois Pathways Initiative, a state-led public education and private business endeavor to support college and career readiness and our state's long-term economic welfare. This Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) initiative aims to help students explore their academic and career interests while also supporting new statewide public-private partnerships known as STEM Learning Exchanges that better coordinate investments, resources and planning for those programs.

Illinois Pathways is funded through our federal Race to the Top grant. Earlier this week we posted a Request for Information (RFI) concerning the establishment of STEM Learning Exchanges. You can review the RFI at <http://www.purchase.state.il.us/ipb/registration.nsf/RegMainFrameset>. The solicitation number is 22024526.

Finally, the AP Report to the Nation was released last week and we are making some great strides. A record number of Illinois students took AP exams in 2011 and Illinois is moving closer to equity among the Latino student population, which has seen AP participation rates quadruple in the last decade, according to "The 8th Annual AP Report to the Nation." The percent of Illinois graduates completing more than one AP exam has more than doubled since 2001 and the percent of seniors posting a successful score on these rigorous exams has increased by 7.5 percentage points since 2001.

To find out more information and see participation and performance levels throughout the state, visit <http://www.isbe.net/news/2012/feb8.htm>.

Have a great week!

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **ISBE offices closed for Presidents' Day** – Feb. 20
- **“Race to the Top and the Illinois Shared Learning Environment” webinar** – Feb. 21 (Register at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/213238985>)
- **Illinois New Teacher Collaborative’s Induction and Mentoring Conference** – Feb. 22-23 in Springfield
- **Migrant Education Program grant application deadline** – March 15 (Application available at <http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/migrant.htm>)
- **Part 226 (Special Education) and Part 575 (School Technology Program)** – Public comment period ends March 26
- **Part 51 (Dismissal of Tenured Teachers under Article 24 and Dismissal of Tenured Teachers and Principals under Article 34 of the School Code)** – Public comment period ends April 2
- **2011-12 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline** – June 30
- **2011-12 Regional Safe Schools Program (RSSP) student reporting deadline** – July 31

Race to the Top

Online Now: Statement of Intent to Participate in the State’s Race to the Top Phase 3 Plan

A letter to superintendents interested in serving as a Participating LEA in the State of Illinois Race to the Top Phase 3 Plan is available online at

http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/pdf/phase3_stmt_of_intent.pdf, along with the Statement of Intent required to participate. Please complete and return this form to express commitment to participating in the State's Race to the Top Phase 3 Plan and the Participating LEA Expectations as set forth on the Race to the Top 3, Participating LEA Expectations and State Supports Chart, available at http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/PDF/rttt3_lea_expectations_timeline.pdf.

This Statement of Intent must be executed by superintendents and the local teachers' union leader (indicating agreement to accelerated PERA implementation) and be received by ISBE no later than Feb. 29, 2012. Please note that we have posted at http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/excel/bottom_20.xlsx a list of the elementary, high school and unit districts that, as Participating LEAs, would be required to fully implement PERA in 2014-2015 as opposed to 2015-2016. Go to http://www.isbe.net/racetothetop/pdf/phase3_stmt_of_intent.pdf for complete details on the submission process.

Feb. 21 Webinar to Cover the Illinois Shared Learning Environment for LEAs

A webinar on Race to the Top and the Illinois Shared Learning Environment is set for Feb. 21. Space is limited. Reserve your webinar seat now at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/213238985>.

As part of Illinois’ plan for the Race to the Top Program, participating LEAs will be connecting into the Illinois Shared Learning Environment (ISLE), a comprehensive platform that will provide new ways of using data to differentiate instruction, deliver digital resources and tools, and improve student outcomes. This webinar will explain what ISLE is and how it works, the resources it will provide, as well as instructional and technical considerations for districts as they evaluate participation in Race to the Top. The webinar will also feature two districts that have already begun a pilot deployment to offer their local perspective. Here are the details:

Title: Race to the Top and the Illinois Shared Learning Environment

Date: Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2012

Time: 3:30-5 p.m.

System Requirements: Windows 7, Vista, XP or 2003 Server required for PC-based attendees. Mac OS X 10.5 or newer required for Macintosh-based attendees.

No Child Left Behind

NCLB Waiver Documents Online for Public Comment and Review

In recent months, states across the country – including Illinois – have taken the lead in calling for changes to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). In September 2011, President Obama announced an ESEA regulatory flexibility initiative, which is based upon the Secretary of Education’s authority to issue waivers. Last week, the Illinois State Board of Education posted its Draft ESEA Flexibility Request at http://www.isbe.net/nclb_waivers/default.htm, and is now accepting public comment.

Send comments or questions to nclbwaiver@isbe.net, no later than 5 p.m., Feb. 17, 2012. The final waiver request will then be submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on Tuesday, Feb. 21, 2012. In submitting your comments, ISBE encourages you not only to provide your concerns and recommendations, but also to identify elements of the waiver request that you support.

Student Assessment

PSAE Pre-ID Deadline: Feb. 24, 2012

On Friday, Feb. 24, 2012, ISBE will send the Pre-ID file to ACT for the purpose of producing PSAE Pre-ID labels. PSAE Pre-ID labels will be printed only for students listed in this file with PSAE as the “Test To Be Taken” and with a Testing School code that represents an established PSAE test site. PSAE Pre-ID labels will be shipped directly to the school identified by the Testing School code in the Pre-ID file. To verify that the Testing School code represents an established PSAE test site for 2012, please see http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2012/psae/test_sites_codes.pdf.

Schools that enroll grade 11 students in ISBE’s Student Information System after Feb. 24, 2012, must still test these students, and they will automatically be added to the Pre-ID file. However, no PSAE Pre-ID label will be printed for these students, and their answer documents must be completed manually according to instructions provided in the PSAE administration manuals.

Please write to psae@isbe.net or call (866) 317-6034 if you have any questions about PSAE Pre-ID labels or PSAE test administration.

PARCC

PARCC Releases Invitation to Negotiate to Engage Educators

The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a 24-state consortium working together to create next generation assessments in English language arts and mathematics, has released through the Florida Department of Education, PARCC's fiscal agent, the Educator Leader Cadre, Meeting Logistics and Meeting Content Services Invitation to Negotiate (ITN). The Educator Leader Cadres (ELC) are a major part of PARCC's ongoing work to engage educators in the implementation of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and the development and implementation of the PARCC assessments.

To read more from the PARCC news release, go to <http://www.parcconline.org/parcc-releases-itn-engage-educators>. For those interested in Illinois, send a letter of interest and resume to Susie Morrison, ISBE Deputy Superintendent, at smorrison@isbe.net.

Innovation and Improvement

ISBE Announces Family Engagement Webinar Topics for February and March

The Illinois State Board of Education's Division of Innovation and Improvement has planned a series of 60-minute Family Engagement Webinars as part of a statewide family engagement initiative. Each webinar in the 2012 series will feature practitioners from the 2011 Regional Summits. The practitioners will share their experiences in the successful implementation of evidence-based family engagement strategies in their schools or districts. These sessions are open to district staff, school staff, parent facilitators, and parents. Information on the upcoming session is given below and you may use the registration links included to register for the webinar described.

Improving High School Family Engagement Through Social and Emotional Learning: This webinar is set for 3:30-4:30 p.m. Feb. 23, 2012. Reserve a seat at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/253542057>.

Recent studies have shown that learning improves when schools attend to the social and emotional needs of their students. Parents also need this kind of support and are eager to learn more about how they can connect to and support their kids. New Trier High School’s principal, Dr. Tim Dohrer, will explain how various school structures and initiatives offer support to students, parents, and staff in all four dimensions of schooling: academic, social, emotional, and physical. Their efforts

have led to a large school that feels small, high levels of academic excellence, and energetic school community that is engaged and excited. Dohrer has worked in a variety of roles in education for over 20 years. For many of those years, he was an English and journalism teacher, student advisor, coach, club sponsor, and chair of many school-based committees and initiatives.

How to Get Families Engaged in an Early Childhood Setting:

This webinar is set for 3:30-4:30 p.m. March 2, 2012: Reserve a webinar seat now at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/417583977>. You plan a great event – you even ordered pizza, but only five families showed up. What went wrong?

Through this webinar, participants will:

- Reflect on what they believe about family engagement and how this will impact what types of activities are planned for families.
- Discuss ways to increase your level of family engagement from 25 percent to over 80 percent of families participating as well as increase the number of parent volunteer hours at your school.
- Discuss providing targeted intervention strategies families may complete at home that include a “DVD” teaching module.
- Review implementation techniques that target hard to reach families and get all families involved.

Parent Involvement in High Poverty Schools:

This webinar is set for 3:30-4:30 p.m. March 22, 2012. Reserve your webinar seat now at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/661486424>. Dr. Sandra Lewis will discuss how she has been able to change the culture and climate of the school and community from one that was infiltrated with gangs and low achievement to one that has received many awards for its outstanding school climate, innovative programs, and academic achievement. As a member of the same community for over 40 years, and now principal at Harold Washington Elementary for the past 22 years, she has become an icon in the community. Lewis has formed partnerships all over the city to bring quality programs and projects to her students and families and has been highlighted on radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and other media. She will share how she attends to the social and emotional needs of students and their parents/families, and the unique and effective approaches she’s implemented to raise student achievement.

Illinois School Report Card

Read More About the Redesigned Illinois School Report Card on the ISBE Website

The new Illinois School Report Card will provide clear and concise information about a school in an accessible one-page tool. House Bill 605, which introduced the redesigned Illinois School Report Card, was signed into law on Jan. 24, 2012, by Gov. Pat. Quinn. The legislation, now Public Act 097-0671, followed months of stakeholder deliberations and nearly 60 community focus groups organized by the Illinois P-20 Council’s Data, Assessment, & Accountability Committee.

Read more on the ISBE website at

http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/rc_redesign.htm.

Resources include an Illinois School Report Card fact sheet, a link to the complete public act and more.

Additional resources will be posted as they become available.

Illinois Youth Risk Behavior Survey

Results of Survey Released by Illinois State Board of Education Contractor

The Illinois State Board of Education, through its contractor, Children’s Memorial Hospital, has just released the results of the 2011 Illinois Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The YRBS focuses on priority health-risk behaviors established during youth that result in the most significant mortality, disability and social problems during both youth and adulthood. Questions are about nutrition, tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, physical activity, injuries and sexual behavior resulting in sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. Additionally, both the Chicago YRBS and the 2011 Illinois YRBS contain questions about students’ sexual orientation.

The 2011 Illinois YRBS was completed by 1,712 students in 33 public high schools in Illinois (excluding Chicago) during the spring of 2011. The school response rate was 77 percent, the student response rate was 89 percent, and the overall response rate was 68 percent. The results are representative of all Illinois students in public high schools, grades 9-12. For more information visit our contractor’s website at <http://www.chdl.org/yrbs.htm>.

Rules and Waivers

Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that three rulemakings recently adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education are now in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency's website at <http://www.isbe.net/rules>. Please choose "Rules Currently in Effect" and scroll to the number of the Part that you wish to review.

Part 25 (Certification): Addresses approval of speech-language pathology programs, and implements several pieces of recently enacted legislation.

Affected Sections: 25.115, 25.130, 25.252, 25.275, and 25.345

Effective Date: January 24, 2012

Part 375 (Student Records): Clarifies school district and nonpublic schools' requirements under the Illinois Student School Records Act [105 ILCS 10] relative to the retention, maintenance, and transfer of student records.

Affected Sections: 375.10, 37.30, 375.40, 375.60, 375.70, 375.75, 375.80, 375.90, and 375.110

Effective Date: January 24, 2012

Part 425 (Voluntary Registration and Recognition of Nonpublic Schools): Amends various sections of these rules addressing initial and renewal deadlines for registered schools; retaining the status of recognized schools at the beginning of the school year; and periodic on-site visits to recognized schools.

Affected Sections: 425.20, 425.30, 425.40, 425.50

Effective Date: January 26, 2012

Professional Development

Scaling Up Pathways to Results 2012 Conference Scheduled for Feb. 24

The Office of Community College Research and Leadership at the University of Illinois and the Illinois Community College Board will hold the Scaling Up Pathways to Results 2012 Conference on Friday, Feb. 24, in Springfield.

This conference would be of interest to school district administrators and high school principals, as the PTR model can be helpful for high school faculties to utilize in their school improvement activities. In particular, school leaders will be interested in attending this conference as they consider their schools' effectiveness in promoting college and career readiness for all students.

The cost of registration is \$50, which includes lunch and all materials. The registration link can be accessed at

<http://ocrl.illinois.edu/projects/pathways/events/scaling-up-february-2012>.

For questions about the conference, contact Don Hackmann at dghack@illinois.edu or (217) 333-0230.

Student Opportunities

Fifth-Graders Can Participate in 2012 Bicycling Poster Contest

The League of Illinois Bicyclists and the Active Transportation Alliance are partnering with Saris Cycling Group to launch a poster contest to get fifth-graders to think about the benefits of the bicycle. The contest is asking fifth grade students to create a poster around the theme "Bicycling Takes Me Places!"

One winner will be selected from each state to receive a bike, bike light and helmet. One national winner will win a trip to the 2013 National Bike Summit in Washington DC and their school will receive bicycle parking to park 20 bikes and a bike/walk tracking system called The Hub.

To learn more about the poster contest, view the informational sheet and contest details available at <http://www.bikelib.org/2012/01/deadline-for-bicycling-poster-contest-march-1/>. Each submitted poster must have an entry form. The deadline to enter is March 1. For more information, contact Gina Kenny at gina@bikelib.org or (708) 334-2244.

Register for the Microsoft Bliink 2012 Illinois Web Design Competition

Educators can register their students for the Microsoft Bliink 2012 Illinois Web Design Competition at <http://bit.ly/Bliink>. The competition is co-sponsored by the Illinois Institute of Technology, Illinois Technology Association and the Chicago Public Schools. It is open to Illinois students ages 13-19 participating in teams of two to four.

Students can win prizes by designing websites with Microsoft Expression Studio. For free Expression Studio learning resources, visit <http://bit.ly/WebTutorials>. For more information, including information on receiving Microsoft Expression Studio professional software at no charge, visit <http://www.bliinkcontest.com>.

The deadline to register is Feb. 28 and the project submission deadline is March 20. Students can submit

projects created in or out of class. For questions, email Pat Phillips at innovativeteachers@microsoft.com.

National World War II Museum Organizes Student Essay Contests

Middle and high school students across the country can enter the National World War II Museum's annual essay contests. Students in grades 5-8 compete in one division and high school students compete in the other for cash prizes and more.

Students are asked to answer "What WWII invention or innovation has had the biggest impact on your life?" Middle school students are asked to write 500 words or less, and high school students must keep their essay 1,000 words or less.

Visit <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/essaycontests> for more information. The deadline to enter is March 30. A website on the science and technology of World War II (<http://www.ww2sci-tech.org/>) provides lesson plans, links and other resources.

Applications for 2012 National Youth Science Camp Available

Applications to attend the 2012 National Youth Science Camp (NYSC) are available online at <http://www.isbe.net/career/default.htm>. Two graduating high school students will be selected to represent Illinois at the all-expenses paid honors program, which will be held from June 27 through July 21, 2012.

For more information about the NYSC, please visit <http://2012.nysc.org/>. For questions about the application process, please contact Gil Downey at (217) 782-4620 or gdowney@isbe.net.

To apply, download the application packet from <http://www.isbe.net/career/default.htm> and follow the enclosed instructions. Mail the completed application to the address below. Applications must be received by Feb. 24, 2012. (Attn: Gil Downey, Principal Consultant, National Youth Science Camp, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 N. First St., C-215, Springfield, IL 62777)

Nutrition

Summer Food Service Program Helps Fill the Nutritional Gap for Children

The Illinois State Board of Education is encouraging school administrators to make sure students take advantage of free, nutritious meals and snacks available this summer at more than 1,700 summer food service program sites statewide. Applications to be a sponsor can be submitted to ISBE beginning March 1.

Summer food programs work by providing free meals and snacks to low-income children through age 18 when school is not in session. People ages 18 and older who are enrolled in school programs for persons with disabilities may also participate. Summer food programs typically operate June through August, but can start as early as May and can go into September.

During the summer of 2010, more than 105,000 low-income Illinois children ate free meals through summer food programs. Those children represent 14.7 percent of the roughly 721,000 children who ate free or reduced-priced meals during the 2009-2010 school year. Nationally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports that more than 18 million children received free or reduced-price school meals during the 2010 school year, but only 2.8 million children received summer meals.

ISBE administers two federally funded summer food programs – the USDA's 'Summer Food Service Program for Children' and the federal National School Lunch Program's 'Seamless Summer Option.' Both programs are designed to bridge the summer nutrition gap by offering free nutritious breakfasts, lunches or snacks to children age 18 and younger.

Local governments, school districts and non-profits can sponsor summer food sites, which may include schools, parks, recreation centers, housing projects, migrant centers, churches, summer camps and others.

Organizations and government entities may apply to ISBE to be a summer food program sponsor beginning March 1 through June 15, 2012. Organizations may also become a site with an existing sponsor; to learn more, visit the ISBE website at <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/summer.htm>.

In the News

Weekly News Clips

ISBE has posted highlights from last week's education news clips at <http://www.isbe.net/news/2012/newsclips/120215.htm>.

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>.