



February 18, 2009

Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

President Obama signed the federal stimulus or American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) in Denver yesterday, providing additional resources to states, local communities and schools. Most of the education funding is expected to be distributed through existing federal and state programs, but some new funding streams, for uses such as school renovation and rehabilitation, are included. This is all moving at a very rapid pace. Details are not emerging as fast as I know all of us would like to see them, however, ISBE expects additional guidance and information to be provided by the U.S. Department of Education in the coming days and throughout the next few weeks. We will continue to apprise you of activities and issues related to the stimulus package.

It has long been stated that school finance reform can never be realized in Illinois as long as there are winners and losers among districts. Of course, one of the responses to reform is to create hold harmless provisions in our state budget. Unfortunately, hold harmless provisions are generally intended to assist with transitions and not to continue without end - which brings me to the point of my message this week, I want to clarify the background and current ISBE positions related to two hold harmless issues—General State Aid (GSA) and Special Education.

As you are aware, the Illinois State Board of Education acted upon my recommendation to decrease GSA Hold Harmless for the FY10 budget. The ISBE budget, which is proposed by the Board and given to the General Assembly and Governor for their consideration, proposes to begin reducing the GSA Hold Harmless amounts and eventually phase it out altogether in FY13.

GSA Hold Harmless payments took effect in FY99 and were intended to correct decreases in GSA that would have impacted 261 districts. Out of the 86 districts receiving GSA Hold Harmless payments in FY09, only 23 have received these payments every year since FY99. Some districts currently receiving GSA Hold Harmless funds were not eligible for these payments when this program began. Those districts have since become eligible only because their Equalized Assessed Valuation (EAV) has increased and Average Daily Attendance (ADA) has decreased, not because their GSA decreased. In fact more than half, 49 of the 86 districts currently receiving GSA Hold Harmless funds, were added in the years following the first payments.

GSA Hold Harmless will amount to \$26.1 million in FY09 and, if the General Assembly increases the Foundation Level for FY10 at the Board's request of \$130, GSA Hold Harmless is estimated to increase to \$36.2 million in FY10. Currently, Illinois is in the midst of a financial crisis and existing programs are not receiving timely payments—it simply does not make sense to fully fund these GSA Hold Harmless payments for FY10.

We have also received a number of inquiries as to whether Special Education Hold Harmless payments were going to be paid by our Agency for FY09. Apparently, there is confusion as to the effect of legislation passed in January 2008 (P.A. 95-0705) regarding the Funding for Children Requiring Special Education Services line item.

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The law requires that our Agency disburse all of the money in the Funding for Children Requiring Special Education Services line item to districts through a formula based on ADA (85%) and poverty count (15%). The 85/15 formula was enacted in 2004 by the General Assembly and was scheduled to be the sole method of disbursement for this line item from FY08 forward. However, P.A. 95-0705 amended the statute and under the new statutory scheme, the Agency is to complete the 85/15 calculation for each district and, if the amount calculated for any district is less than what the district received in FY07, a supplemental appropriation is required to bring such districts back to their FY07 level.

The FY09 fiscal impact for Special Education Hold Harmless has been calculated at \$17.6 million impacting 223 districts, based on the amount of money districts received through the formula for the Funding for Children Requiring Special Education Services line, however, no such appropriation currently exists in our FY09 budget. In FY08, 255 districts received the hold harmless payments only after a supplemental appropriation of \$21million was made.

There are several hurdles to clear before the FY10 budget becomes law. I know many districts are speaking with legislators to encourage maintenance of the GSA Hold Harmless line item and the pursuit of appropriations for Special Education Hold Harmless. I understand why districts that will be impacted are doing so, and I would probably do so myself if I were in these districts' position. However, I must think about what is right for all Illinois districts.

As always, we will comply with the law and the State budget that is eventually passed. We appreciate your support of our FY10 proposed budget and thank you for your efforts to provide a quality education to all Illinois children.

Have a great week!

Chris

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## Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- **Home school districts deadline to submit pre-ID label information for PSAE on SIS – February 20 (*new date*)**
- **District deadline to submit online Technology Integration Plan (TIP) to ISBE for FY10 approval – February 27**
- **School district Verification Process finalized – February 27**
- **Looking for Your Lincoln Hero submissions – March 1**
- **Noncertified Staff Salary Study deadline for submission – March 2**
- **Migrant supplemental education services funding applications for summer 2009 – March 2**
- **Receipt deadline for schools to submit PSAE Day 1 state-allowed accommodations applications to ACT – March 6**
- **21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) proposals – March 16**
- **Textbook loan program requests entered online – March 16**
- **History Teacher of the Year Award first round nominations – March 16**
- **Illinois Young Author's program entries – March 27**
- **Part 145 (Temporary Relocation Expenses); Part 151 (School Construction Program); and Part 675 (Providers of Supplemental Education Services): Public comment ends – March 30**
- **Even Start Family Literacy RFP – April 2**

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## English Language Learning

### Home Language Survey Updated

The Home Language Survey (HLS) is part of the enrollment process for all students newly enrolling in a school district. The HLS may appear on the enrollment form or on a separate form.

The HLS consists of two multi-part questions. The first multi-part question has been revised to read: “Is a language other than English spoken in your home?” If the answer is yes, the parent is then asked to identify what language is spoken.

The second multi-part question has not been changed. It reads: “Does your child speak a language other than English?” If the answer is yes, the parent is then asked to identify what language the child speaks. If the answer to either of the questions is “yes,” the law requires the school to assess the child’s English language proficiency.

Districts should update the wording on their HLS to match the new text. Districts may include additional questions, but the first two provided by the State Board must be worded exactly as posted on the English Language Learning (ELL) website.

The new English and Spanish versions of the Home Language Survey are posted on the ELL website at [www.isbe.net/bilingual](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual) and are ready for district use. Versions in 39 additional languages should be available by the end of February and in time for early kindergarten registration this spring. Districts must complete the survey for every student who enrolls for the first time.

The survey is important to districts and the state because the information collected is used to count the students whose families speak a language other than English at home. It also helps to identify the students who need to be assessed for English language proficiency.

Districts can find the definition of Home Language in the Illinois Administrative Code, Section 228.10 and Identification of Eligible Students in Section 228.15. For additional information, contact Robin Lisboa, English Language Learning, at [rlisboa@isbe.net](mailto:rlisboa@isbe.net).

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## Student Assessment

### IAA 2009 Training Resources

The Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) Regional Teacher Trainings are complete and the information provided in those trainings is now available on the State Board website: <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/iaa.htm>.

The slide presentation, sample grade level IAA tasks, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) all have been posted. Sample videos of students taking the new IAA will follow shortly.

Questions on test administration and procedures should be directed to **Pearl Schneider** at [pschneid@isbe.net](mailto:pschneid@isbe.net) or via phone at 217-782-4823 or toll free at 866-262-6663.

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## Lincoln Bicentennial

### Illinois Schools Reminder

ISBE thanks all schools who celebrated Lincoln’s 200<sup>th</sup> Birthday with a nationwide simultaneous reading of the Gettysburg Address at **9:30 a.m. on February 12.**

In addition, if your school accessed materials from the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum website, please complete the short survey to provide them with feedback. The survey link is <http://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/17692g3a555>.

If your school participated in the Gettysburg Address, it is not too late to enter the information in the Guinness Book of World Records. Illinois is attempting to break the current simultaneous reading aloud record. To register your school, go to [http://www.alplm.org/events/Gettysburg\\_Address/Gettysburg\\_Address\\_reading.html](http://www.alplm.org/events/Gettysburg_Address/Gettysburg_Address_reading.html).

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## Rules & Waivers

### Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that two rulemaking items recently adopted by the State Board are now in effect.

One of these involves a new Part of rules that replaces Emergency Rules previously in effect, while the other consists of amendments to Part 525 (please see below). The adopted amendments 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 245 (Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program)**

Establishes requirements for grants to assist school districts in facilitating the enrollment, attendance, and success of homeless children and youth.

**Affected Sections:** All

**Effective Date:** January 27, 2009

**Part 525 (Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Services)**

Updated to eliminate outdated cross-references to Part 110; included other technical updates.

**Affected Sections:** 525.130, 525.160

**Effective Date:** January 27, 2009

**Nutrition****Summer Food Service Program Workshops**

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) workshop schedule is now available. The SFSP is designed to bridge the “nutrition gap” when school is not in session.

Training workshops for SFSP will be held at the following locations for organizations interested in sponsoring SFSP during the summer of 2009.

New Sponsor Orientation

March 5: Bloomington

March 11: Alsip

March 25: Marion

April 2: Galesburg

April 9: Fairview Heights

April 22: Rolling Meadows

May 13: Springfield

Current Sponsor Orientation

March 12: Alsip

March 26: Marion

April 1: Galesburg

April 8: Fairview Heights

Sessions are designed to provide a complete overview of SFSP. All first-year sponsors are required to attend the New Sponsor’s Orientation. Previous-year sponsors can attend the Current Sponsor Orientation, but may come to the New Sponsor Orientation as a refresher. It is highly recommended that organizations require new employees to attend. Lunch will be provided at the New Sponsor Orientation. Check our website below for times.

Reservations are required for the half-day and full-day workshops and must be made in advance. To register or obtain additional information, please visit our website at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/sfsp\\_training.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/sfsp_training.htm) or contact **Amy Bianco** at 800-545-7892 or at [abianco@isbe.net](mailto:abianco@isbe.net).

The SFSP is targeted to low-income areas where at least 50 percent of children qualify for free or reduced-price school meals. Children up to age 18 can eat free nutritious breakfasts, lunches or snacks at summer feeding sites operated by approved sponsors. Sponsors receive federal reimbursement for serving meals that meet USDA nutrition guidelines. Many sponsors also offer educational, enrichment or physical activities, or collaborate with others to do so.

If the responsibilities of sponsorship of the SFSP are not possible, you can still help by providing meals to other local sponsors, supervise a feeding site, or team up with a sponsor to provide any activity that makes summer fun. In any case, children win.

**Two Illinois Schools Achieve HealthierUS School Challenge Award Silver Level Status**

Kudos to Bushnell-Prairie City Elementary School in Bushnell, and Ridgeview Elementary School in Colfax, which are the first two schools in Illinois to achieve silver level status in the HealthierUS School Challenge (HUSC) initiative.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Food and Nutrition Service HUSC silver level award recipients have demonstrated the following attributes:

- Are a Team Nutrition school.
- Offer reimbursable lunches that demonstrate healthy menu planning practices as well as principles of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.
- Provide nutrition education to students and the opportunity for physical education.
- Maintain an average daily participation of 70 percent or greater.
- Adhere to FNS established guidelines for foods served and sold in school outside of the National School Lunch Program.

Special recognition ceremonies are planned for **March 17**, at Colfax, and **May 5** at the Illinois School Wellness Conference in Decatur for Bushnell-Prairie City Elementary School. The schools will receive a plaque and banner from USDA representatives.

If your elementary school is interested in taking the Challenge at the bronze, silver or even gold level, visit

[www.fns.usda.gov/tn](http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn) and click on 2009 HealthierUS School Challenge.

## Wellness Policy Monitoring Tool

Action for Healthy Kids (AFHK) has launched an easy-to-use tool to help schools continually assess and improve implementation of their district's wellness policy.

The AFHK Wellness Policy Monitoring Tool is fully customizable for each school and provides an implementation 'desk top' where users can post their wellness policy initiatives, note progress, plan their next steps, and determine resources needed. The results page scores the user's profile and provides links to helpful resources based on areas needing improvement.

Go to the AFHK website to begin using the tool at [www.actionforhealthykids.org/wellnesstool/Presentations/pres-out652.php/](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/wellnesstool/Presentations/pres-out652.php/).

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## Grants & Programs

### Illinois Rain Garden Initiative

The Illinois Rain Garden Initiative is part of Governor Pat Quinn's Sustainable Infrastructure project. The Rain Garden Initiative is designed to empower students and communities to learn about green solutions to storm water management.

Governor Quinn's office will award 20 grants of \$500 each to any public institution, non-profit group or school to plant rain gardens.

For more information and applicant materials, visit [www.raingarden.il.gov](http://www.raingarden.il.gov) or contact Jamie Campbell at 312-814-6671. Deadline for submission is **Monday, March 2**.

### Teachers Can Now Apply for 2009 Earth Day in the Parks Program

Now is the time for Illinois teachers to submit applications to participate in the Earth Day in the Parks program sponsored by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and the Illinois Conservation Foundation. The application deadline is **Saturday, February 28**.

Earth Day in the Parks is celebrated on a day in April and it gives students the opportunity to learn on location about the environment through hands-on activities. Forty-nine Illinois state parks are participating in the 2009 events.

Students will spend approximately two hours at the park completing a natural resources stewardship activity, such as planting native trees and wildflowers, removing invasive exotic plant species or constructing wildlife habitat structures. Each teacher may apply to attend the event with his/her students at one of the participating parks. Nearly twice the number of parks are participating this year compared to last, which will give hundreds of students the opportunity to join in.

Dates for participating state parks are listed on the IDNR website. Applications must be received by the IDNR Division of Education by **Saturday, February 28**. For the application, list of participating parks and instructions for participating, go to [http://www.dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/EDITPi\\_nstruct.htm](http://www.dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/EDITPi_nstruct.htm).

For questions, contact the IDNR Division of Education at [dnr.teachkids@illinois.gov](mailto:dnr.teachkids@illinois.gov) or call 217-524-4126.

### Book Grants Available

The Illinois School Library Media Association/Library Book Selection Service (ISLMA/LBSS) Endowment Fund will issue its second annual book grants. Public and private school libraries as well as public libraries registered in any of the children's choice reading awards programs—the Monarch Award, the Rebecca Caudill Young Readers Book Award and the Abraham Lincoln Illinois High School Book Award—are eligible to apply.

Grant recipients will be awarded one set of books for the 2010 reading campaign for the book award the library indicated on their application. The titles in each book award set are determined by the individual committees in charge of the reading award programs. Sets include one copy of each of the 20 or 22 books depending on the award program selected.

For more information, go to the ISLMA/LBSS Endowment Fund website ([www.lbssfund.org](http://www.lbssfund.org)). The application form will be available starting **Sunday, March 15**, with the grant application deadline on **Friday, May 15**. Applicants must also be registered to participate in the appropriate 2010 children's choice program by **May 15**.

Those interested should direct questions to [info@lbsfund.org](mailto:info@lbsfund.org), by fax to 309-649-0916 or by phone to 309-649-0911.

Book vendors interested in bidding for the contract to provide books for this grant will find information at the same website.

The ISLMA/LBSS Endowment Fund's mission is to "Promote reading in Illinois." In 2008, the fund awarded 160 sets of books to school and public libraries.

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## School Business Services

### School District Annual Financial Report Verification Process

All district superintendents should have received an e-mail broadcast asking the district to verify the Operating Expense Per Pupil/Per Capita Tuition Charge (OEPP/PCTC) [ISBE Form 50-35](#), and the Financial Profile Report by the **Friday, February 27**, deadline.

The broadcast included links to the memorandum, instructions, and definitions to assist with the verification process. These documents are also available in [IWAS](#) and on the [Verification](#) 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 verify these reports, please forward the e-mail broadcast to them. The instructions and deadlines are important in completing the verification process in a timely manner. Once the deadline passes, changes to the 2008 Annual Financial Report (AFR) data will not be allowed.

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, this is an opportunity for districts to explain significant financial circumstances. For further details see the [Verification](#) webpage.

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.

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## Curriculum & Instruction

### Technology Integration Plans Deadlines

An approved Technology Integration Plan (TIP) is required for participation in and eligibility for e-Rate reimbursement or discounts under NCLB Title II Part D (EETT) funding, and other state or federal funding initiatives that support educational technology.

Districts should have completed and kept on file Basic (Draft Plans) Technology Integration Plans, covering at least one full fiscal funding year (July 1-June 30) prior to submitting a Form 470 for e-Rate reimbursement or discount in **January 2009**.

Please keep the following dates in mind as the filing window for e-Rate FY10 is quickly coming to a close:

**Thursday, February 12:** Last date to have submitted a USAC Form 471 for selection of eligible services.

**Friday, February 27:** Last date for districts to submit an online Technology Integration Plan (TIP) to ISBE through <http://iirc.niu.edu> for FY10 approval.

Districts should contact their Learning Technology Center (LTC) Director for technical assistance in writing the plan. The LTC Director is able to assist with districts seeking approval for a Technology Integration Plan for the first time or replacing an existing plan that expires **June 30, 2009**.

Questions about the Technology Integration Plan approval process, NCLB Tech Plan rules, and e-Rate Tech Plan compliance are always welcome at ISBE. For assistance, contact **Faith Bishop** at [fbishop@isbe.net](mailto:fbishop@isbe.net) or **Kathy Barnhart** at [kbarnhar@isbe.net](mailto:kbarnhar@isbe.net) or 217-557-7323.

### CDC's Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool Available

CDC's Health Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (HECAT) now addresses all nine key content areas. It offers guidance, appraisal tools, and resources needed to conduct a clear, complete and consistent examination of health education curricula.

[Are you interested in:](#)

- Selecting or developing appropriate and effective health education curricula?
- Enhancing your existing health education curriculum?
- Improving the delivery of health education?

The nine key content areas of health education include:

- Alcohol and other Drugs
- Healthy Eating
- Mental and Emotional Health
- Personal Health and Wellness
- Physical Activity
- Safety
- Sexual Health
- Tobacco
- Violence Prevention

The HECAT was developed in partnership with health education experts representing state education agencies, school districts, schools, colleges, and national organizations. It is based on the National Health Education Standards and CDC's Characteristics of Effective Health Education Curricula. You can customize the HECAT to meet your community's needs and the curriculum requirements of your state and school district. HECAT materials are available, at no charge, in PDF and print formats at [www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/HECAT](http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/HECAT). Continue to check this web site for updates and resources, including the final module to analyze a comprehensive health education curriculum.

### GlobalFest International Celebration

GlobalFest, the annual celebration of languages and cultures for Illinois junior high and senior high students, is set for **Friday and Saturday, March 13 and 14**, at Urbana High School in Urbana, Illinois.

This international language event brings together students from throughout the state. They experience immersion and cultures of more than 18 languages, art, music, dance, performance, food, activities and presentations from students and adults from around the world.

GlobalFest is connected to the Illinois Learning Standards as well as providing in-service training for teachers and administrators.

For more information on the events planned for students and teachers, contact Mary Slider at

[mslider@wfschools.org](mailto:mslider@wfschools.org); 618-932-3126 ext. 160; or FAX 618-932-6515.

## Early Childhood

### Even Start Family Literacy RFP Released

The Even Start Family Literacy FY 2010 Request for Proposals (RFP) has been released. School districts, Regional Offices of Education, approved public university laboratory schools, charter schools or area vocational centers, *in partnership with* a community-based organization, public agency, institution of higher education, or not-for-profit organization may submit a proposal.

The purpose of Even Start Family Literacy grants is to help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by improving the educational opportunities of low-income families through the integration of (1) early childhood education, (2) adult literacy, (3) parenting education, and (4) interactive parent and child literacy activities into a unified family literacy program for parents and children, primarily from birth through age 7.

All four of these components must be present in each Even Start program in order to meet the goals of the program, which are to:

- help parents improve their literacy or basic educational skills,
- help parents become full partners in educating their children, and
- assist children in reaching their full potential as learners.

A bidders' conference will be held by conference call on **Friday, February 20**, at 10 a.m. (See the RFP for details.) Should the conditions of this RFP change as a result of the bidders' conference, the State Board will notify all recipients.

The RFP is available online at [http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/even\\_start\\_family\\_literacy.htm](http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/even_start_family_literacy.htm).

The RFP can also be obtained from **Cindy Zumwalt** in the Early Childhood Division at [czumwalt@isbe.net](mailto:czumwalt@isbe.net) or 217-524-4835.

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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/2009/newsclips/090213.htm>

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