



Illinois State Board of Education

Weekly Message

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Christopher A. Koch, Ed.D.
State Superintendent

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Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week, the President signed the federal stimulus package or the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), which is aimed toward investing federal dollars into the economy and spurring the desperately needed financial recovery in our country. The ARRA could mean an additional \$9 billion in funding for Illinois, with up to \$3 billion earmarked specifically for education purposes.

While this is good news for Illinois schools, we all need to proceed with caution. The stimulus is only intended to last two years, so we will need to be very careful with how we plan to use these funds. In addition, how the 'maintenance of effort' and 'supplement not supplant' provisions will work under the ARRA is complex. In our initial reading of the bill, it appears that these would still apply for local districts in most, if not all cases. We expect to receive additional guidance on these issues within the next several weeks from the U.S. Department of Education.

We have set up a page on our Web site to provide more information on the stimulus, including an analysis of 'maintenance of effort' and 'supplement not supplant' issues prepared by the Council of Chief State School Officers. We will update this site as new information becomes available. It also includes links to the federal and Illinois recovery Web sites. You can access the Illinois State Board Education recovery page at <http://www.isbe.net/arra/default.htm>.

Additionally, I want you to know that we are preparing to transmit additional federal funds to you as they become available. However, I'm not sure that they will be coming as quickly as I have seen portrayed in some media articles. Currently, only the additional McKinney-Vento funding under the ARRA has specific timelines for distribution, which would be sometime later this spring. The federal government has said it wants to get these funds moving as quickly as possible. But realistically, I would not anticipate schools seeing these additional funds until the 2009-2010 school year.

Finally, next week marks the beginning of the regular testing window for the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). Online sample tests are currently up and running and you may access additional ISAT specific information at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/isat.htm>. The dates for the administration of the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) are March 9-27 and you may access IAA specific information at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/iaa.htm>. Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) specific information may be accessed at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/psae.htm>, with test dates on April 22-23 and makeup dates are May 6-7.

Thank you for your dedication to doing everything possible to prepare your students for success on the Illinois assessments.

Have a great week!

Chris

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Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- **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
- **21st 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

Special Education

Special Education Class Size for 2009-2010 and Beyond

In conjunction with the revised federal regulations under the 2004 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, the state special education rules (23 Illinois Administrative Code 226; <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/226ark.pdf>) were revised in 2007.

As part of that rulemaking process, ISBE afforded interested parties a public comment period that far exceeded the required length. After review of the amendments by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules, the revised version became effective on **June 28, 2007**.

Section 226.730(b) of the rules (full text available at the link provided) sets forth the requirements for determining special education class size for the 2009-2010 school year and beyond. As a result of numerous questions directed to ISBE regarding the new class size requirements, we have developed a guidance document that is available on the ISBE website at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/guidance_09-01.pdf.

The guidance document discusses factors such as the age and educational needs of students that must be considered in the formation of special education classes and the process for determining class size, including examples.

Questions about the information contained in the guidance document may be directed to Special Education Services in Springfield by calling 217-782-5589.

Student Assessment

Important Information on Rulers for ISAT Mathematics Tests at Grades 4 – 8

All students taking the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) mathematics test are provided with rulers from Pearson for use with all three sessions of the test.

The markings on this year's Grade 4-8 testing rulers are different from what was provided in the previously released sample materials. The testing rulers have increments to the 1/4 inch and 1/2 cm.

Should you want your students to participate in practice activities with a similar ruler, we have a PDF file with updated rulers on the ISBE student assessment website at: www.isbe.net/assessment/isat.htm.

Please remember that because of differences in printers, you should verify the accuracy of the rulers copied from this PDF file.

Do not use the rulers in your shipment of ISAT testing materials for practice with your students. These rulers should be used only with the actual ISAT mathematics test.

For questions, please contact Student Assessment at 217-782-4823.

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 or via phone at 217-782-4823 or toll free at 866-262-6663.

Rules & Waivers

Waiver Process Update

Some of you may have been a beneficiary of recent streamlining to the waiver process. The Rules and Waivers Division will be using e-mail to notify school districts and other entities eligible to request waivers or modifications of School Code mandates and administrative rules of the progress of their requests. Please be aware that these communications will prominently list “waiver” or “modification” in the subject line of the e-mail, followed by status of the request (e.g., approved, incomplete, pending).

Staff will be contacting you by e-mail if your request is missing any required components, such as copies of your public notices or a description of your public hearing. Remember, requests cannot be processed until they are complete.

As Rules and Waivers staff move into this new process, they welcome your suggestions for improvements. If you wish to share any ideas, please e-mail **Winnie Tuthill** at wtuthill@isbe.net or call at 217-782-5270.

Grants & Programs

Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program RFP Released

The Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) FY 2010 Request for Proposals (RFP) has been released. Eligible applicants are public school districts, Regional Offices of Education, community colleges districts, public university laboratory schools approved by the State Board of Education, charter schools and area vocational centers.

The purpose of these programs is to offer modified instructional programs or other services designed to prevent students from dropping out of school.

Bidders’ conferences will be held on **Friday, March 6**, and **Wednesday, March 11**. (See the RFP for details.)

The RFP is available online at <http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/taoep.htm>.

The application deadline is 5 p.m., **Monday, April 20**.

For more information on the TAOEP RFP contact **Sally Veach**, Grants and Programs Division, at sveach@isbe.net or 217-524-4832.

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 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.

Lincoln Bicentennial

Illinois Schools Reminder

ISBE thanks all schools who celebrated Lincoln's 200th 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.

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 or contact Amy Bianco at 800-545-7892 or at 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/tu 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/.

Grant Opportunities

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 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/EDITPinstruct.htm>.

For questions, contact the IDNR Division of Education at 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). 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@lbssfund.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.

Professional Development

Designing a High-Quality Charter School

A Charter Starter webinar is scheduled for **Thursday, March 12**, from 4-5:30 p.m. and will be presented by **Anne Levy Brown** and **Steve Zemelman**.

The webinar is provided by Illinois Network of Charter Schools. Details will be e-mailed to all registered participants. To register, go to:

http://www.incschools.org/start_a_charter.html

This interactive webinar will provide the information needed to begin planning a high-performing charter public school in Chicago's suburbs or greater Illinois. Participants will:

- Understand the process and requirements for charter school start-up in Illinois.
- Gain a roadmap for designing an excellent school.
- Learn about common stumbling blocks and how to overcome them.
- Get answers to your pressing questions.

This session is designed to complement *Paving a New Path: A Guidebook for Illinois Charter Public School Development*. Filled with examples, best practices and practical advice, *Paving a New Path* is the essential guide for every step of the charter development process. For more information or to order *Paving a New Path*, visit www.incschools.org.

For questions contact **Anne Levy Brown** at alevybrown@incschools.org or 312-235-0798 x18.

Curriculum & Instruction

WWF 2009 Earth Hour

The World Wildlife Fund is once again issuing a call to action for climate change across the globe. Businesses, organizations and individuals in 377 cities across 74 countries have agreed to turn off their lights for 60 minutes at 8:30 p.m. on **Saturday, March 28**.

For more information visit:

<http://www.worldwildlife.org/who/media/press/2009/WWFPresitem11385.html>.

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/2009/newsclips/090220.htm>.
