



Illinois State Board of Education

Weekly Message

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Feb. 26, 2013

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

A record number of Illinois students are taking AP exams and posting successful scores according to the ninth annual AP Report to the Nation released last week. The number of Illinois graduates who take AP exams during high school more than doubled in the last decade, with low-income and minority students continuing to make record gains toward closing the achievement gap on these rigorous tests.

Illinois ranks 16th in the nation for the percentage of 2012 graduates – 19.9 percent – who scored at least a 3 on an AP exam during their high school career. The national average is 19.5 percent. In 2012, more than 26,400 graduates scored a 3 or higher on an AP exam, with 17.6 percent of these students coming from low-income backgrounds, according to the AP Report to the Nation.

A total of 40,653 graduates took at least one AP exam during high school in 2012 compared to 18,833 in 2007. Low-income students comprised 28.9 percent of graduates who took an AP exam during high school in 2012 compared to only 17.6 percent in 2007. Meanwhile, the number of low-income graduates scoring a 3 or higher nearly tripled during the past five years.

Illinois is closing the equity gap among Hispanic/Latino students with these students comprising 15.6 percent of graduates in 2012 and 18.3 percent of AP exam takers. In five years, the number of Hispanic/Latino graduates who took an AP exam during high school more than doubled from 3,271 in 2007 to 7,441 in 2012. Hispanic/Latino graduates also accounted for nearly 15 percent of exam takers scoring a 3 or higher in 2012, compared to 13.1 percent in 2011 and 9.4 percent in 2007.

Black/African-American students comprised 12.4 percent of graduates who took at least one AP exam in 2012 compared to 10.2 percent in 2007. The number of these students who scored a 3 or higher doubled from 601 in 2007 to 1,202 in 2012.

You can find out additional information on AP participation by district at <http://www.isbe.net/news/2013/pdf/ap-participation.pdf> or by performance at <http://www.isbe.net/news/2013/pdf/ap-success.pdf>.

Last week the Board voted 5-1 in favor of putting out for public comment the repeal of the rules that define special education and general education class size limits (Sections 226.730 and 226.731). The rulemaking is posted on the agency's website at <http://www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm> and the proposed amendments will be published in the Illinois Register on Friday, March 8, 2013, (<http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/index/register/home.html>), which will begin the official 45-day public comment period. The public comment period will end at close of business on April 22, 2013. The rules will go to the State Board for adoption in late spring.

There was significant debate during our Board meeting, both for and against the proposal, however, our current rules go beyond federal law and class size is an issue that is best addressed locally. These artificial limits are, in some cases,

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actually keeping students with disabilities out of general education classrooms, limiting their access to the curriculum and instruction they deserve and need to be successful.

Also this week we will learn if sequestration cuts will take effect on the federal budget. If sequestration is allowed to occur it would mean an across the board reduction on federal programs, which could have significant impact on Title I, IDEA and many other programs vital to Illinois schools. We are currently working with the American Association of School Administrators and the Council of Chief State School Officers to more accurately determine the impact of these cuts on schools and will use that information to highlight the impact. They have developed a SmartForm for districts that allows you to calculate district-specific cuts. Please, consider taking the time to input your information so we can more accurately portray the impact on Illinois with our federal legislators.

If sequestration does take effect we will provide more details as they become available. You may access more information on sequestration at <http://www.isbe.net/sequestration/default.htm>.

Finally, congratulations to Indian Grove Elementary School and Euclid Elementary School, both in suburban Mt. Prospect, and Prairieview Ogden South Elementary School in Central Illinois, which are Illinois' three finalists in the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools award program. The Green Ribbon Schools award program recognizes schools that save energy, reduce costs, protect student and staff health and wellness, and offer environmental education. The U.S. winners will be announced in April and there will be an award ceremony in Washington, D.C., in late May.

Have a great week.

Chris

Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

Please note this is not a complete list of dates and deadlines. For questions, call the Illinois State Board of Education at (866) 262-6663 or (217) 782-4321 or visit the agency's official website at <http://www.isbe.net>.

- **Part 35 (Mentoring Program for New Principals)** – Public comment period ends March 25
- **Part 375 (Student Records)** – Public comment period ends March 25
- **Part 405 (Payments to Certain Facilities under Section 14-7.05 of the School Code)** – Public comment period ends March 25
- **Part 475 (Contested Cases and Other Formal Hearings)** – Public comment period ends March 25
- **Part 565 (Class Size Reduction Grants)** – Public comment period ends March 25
- **Part 226 (Special Education)** – Public comment period ends April 22
- **Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) FY 2014 RFP** – Must be submitted to ISBE by 5 p.m. on April 22
- **Applications for the Exception to the 1.0 Percent Cap due** – May 17
- **Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (ALOP) Continuation Application deadline** – June 28
(Applications available at <http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/alop.htm>)
- **0-3 Prevention Initiative – Outcomes Questionnaire IWAS data entry deadline** – July 1 (IWAS Reporting Guide available at http://www.isbe.net/research/htmls/pfa_prev_init.htm)
- **0-3 Prevention Initiative – Parent Questionnaire IWAS data entry deadline** – July 1 (IWAS Reporting Guide available at http://www.isbe.net/research/htmls/pfa_prev_init.htm)
- **Student Health Data** – Vision system report deadline – July 1
- **Regional Safe Schools End of Year Data reporting deadline** – July 31 (User guide for the IWAS reporting system, http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/rssp_iwas_user_guide.pdf)
- **Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) reporting deadline** – July 31 (User guide for the IWAS reporting system, <ftp://help.isbe.net/webapps/taoep/pdf/TAOEP.pdf>)

- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Fall 2013** – Aug. 16 (see <http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm> for new public notice requirements for all waiver requests)

Assessment

Administration of the Ninth and 10th Grade EXPLORE/PLAN – Fall 2013

We are pleased to announce the continued availability of EXPLORE/PLAN for all ninth- and 10th-grade students as part of our reform agenda and move toward a growth model of accountability. The high school assessment plan will provide schools and districts a complete picture of student progress from grades 3 through 11 and provide data for the calculation of student growth.

Please Note: The opportunity to participate in these assessments will be the only state-funded path to administer the EXPLORE and PLAN in the 2013-14 school year. Test administration must take place between Sept. 16 and Nov. 8. The state will pay only for the administration of EXPLORE at grade 9 and PLAN at grade 10 during this testing window.

Center for Innovation and Improvement

Mathematics Curriculum Models Coming to Help Aid Common Core Implementation

The Illinois State Board of Education has been charged by the Illinois 97th General Assembly to implement Public Act 97-704. The State Board of Education is to coordinate the acquisition, adaptation and development of middle and high school Mathematics Curriculum Models to aid school districts and teachers in implementing Common Core Mathematics State Standards for all students. The Public Act required representation from statewide educational organizations and stakeholders. A committee consisting of a middle school mathematics team and a high school mathematics team has been created to address this charge. The work of the committee will be completed by mid-February 2013 and available to the General Assembly by March 1. It will be available to districts after this date.

The team for high school mathematics has chosen to focus on the integrated approach for the Mathematics Curriculum Model. The middle school Mathematics Curriculum Model will be aligned with the high school model. The resulting product will provide districts an opportunity to examine an integrated Mathematics

Curriculum Models framework. This curriculum work is designed to be an example.

The curriculum examples will be shared with districts to help them in their implementation of the Mathematics Common Core Standards. The Mathematics Curriculum Models may be seen as tools for districts to use for the implementation of the Mathematics Common Core State Standards at the middle and high school level. Districts are not required to use this curriculum framework and may adopt or adapt this curriculum as they see fit.

The Illinois Board of Education has not officially made a decision on whether the state model will be the traditional or the integrated approach at the high school level.

Early Childhood

Request for Proposals Sought for Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (IECAM)

The Illinois Early Childhood Asset Map (RFP) was released Feb. 19, 2013. ISBE is seeking applications from eligible entities that will maintain and further refine an Illinois early childhood asset mapping website (IECAM) for early childhood personnel, state agency personnel and the general public.

Specifically, the website should provide online access to demographic data on young children and data on early care and education services in Illinois. Applicants must explain how they will combine up-to-date demographic information with early childhood program information from PI and PFA, Head Start, and child care. The website should use a sophisticated electronic coding/mapping function to locate early childhood programs correlated with demographic data across multiple sectors of the state. It is anticipated that the successful applicant will have access to the existing pages and resources of the current site in order to make the transition to the applicant's system and to support the site with its own infrastructure.

The current IECAM website is located at <http://iecam.crc.uiuc.edu/>. The RFP is available at http://isbe.net/funding_opps/htmls/rfp.htm, and must be received at ISBE no later than 4 p.m. on April 8, 2013. The RFP can also be obtained by contacting the Early Childhood Division at (217) 524-4835.

Special Education Services

Information on the Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program RFP

The bidders' conferences for the Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) Request for Proposal (RFP) will be 9:15-11 a.m. Friday, March 8, at the Doubletree Hotel and Conference Center in Bloomington and through a webinar from 9 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, March 13. To register for the webinar, go to <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/598670545>.

The deadline for submitting the TAOEP RFP is Monday, April 22. The FY 2014 TAOEP RFP can be found at <http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/taoep.htm>.

For additional information, contact Sally Veach or V. Sue Taylor in ISBE's Special Education Services Division at (217) 782-5589 and sveach@isbe.net or vtaylor@isbe.net.

Application for the Exception to the 1% Cap Reminder

If more than 1 percent of your students in grades 3 through 8 and 11 are identified as significantly cognitively disabled, it is time to prepare your district's application for an exception to the 1 percent cap. If the conditions for the exception are approved, then all "progressing" and "attaining" scores earned by students taking the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) will be counted as proficient in making determinations for school, district and state AYP.

K-8 Districts: Apply after the ISAT testing is completed (March 15 for most districts).

High School and K-12 Districts: Apply after the PSAE makeup date has passed (May 8).

The 2012-2013 applications are due on or before May 17, 2013. The form is available at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/37-58_percent_cap_form.pdf. Instructions are available at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/waiver_guidance.pdf. For more information, please contact Kelly Wojcik at kwojcik@isbe.net or at (217) 782-5589.

Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth Conference Set for March 7-8 in Bloomington

The Illinois Coalition for Educating At-Risk Youth will host its annual statewide conference March 7-8 at the

Doubletree Hotel and Convention Center in Bloomington.

The keynote speaker for Thursday is Darrius Garrett, the author of the upcoming book "Diary of a Freedom Writer" and one of the student "Freedom Writers" in the best-selling book by teacher Erin Gruwell. The book was the inspiration for the 2007 movie "Freedom Writers," starring Hilary Swank and Patrick Dempsey. Darrius will share stories of his educational experience and the role that education, especially writing and reading, played in helping him change the direction of his life.

Friday's keynote is Deadre Stanton, a teacher of English, speech and theater. Coming from an in-the-trenches perspective, Stanton will draw on real life examples and humor to reaffirm that your choices in life are good ones.

Several breakout sessions are also available on such topics as online learning, Common Core, writing, ADD/ADHD and more. For more information on the conference and to register, go to <http://www.iceary.org> and click on "conferences and trainings."

Deadline for 2012-13 District Technology Plan on Illinois Interactive Report Card is Feb. 28

If your district has a technology plan that will expire on June 30, 2013, please note that the district technology plan, completed through the Illinois Interactive Report Card, is due on Feb. 28, 2013. No late plans will be accepted.

The Illinois State Board of Education has provided a writing guide to help districts through the new template and provide writing guidance. Detailed information and the guide can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/elearning/html/tech_plan.htm.

For access to the IIRC, log in or register at <https://iirc.niu.edu/MyIIRC/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fMyIIRC%2fHome.aspx>.

Governmental Relations

Reminder Regarding the Abolishment of General Assembly Legislative Scholarships

On July 11, 2012, the governor signed legislation abolishing the General Assembly scholarship program in Illinois. Public Act 97-0772 can be viewed at <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/97/PDF/097-0772.pdf>.

Previously, Illinois law provided for each member of the General Assembly to annually nominate two persons of school age and otherwise eligible, from his or her district to receive a certificate of scholarship in any state supported university designated by the member.

For questions, contact ISBE Public Information Division at (217) 782-4648.

DCFS

An Important Message About the State's Child Abuse Hotline and Available Resources

School personnel play a vital role in efforts to stop child abuse and neglect in Illinois. School staff – primarily teachers and school social workers – accounted for roughly one in five reports of suspected abuse or neglect to the state's Child Abuse Hotline (1-800-25-ABUSE) during the most recent year.

Reports of suspected abuse or neglect are vital to the efforts of Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to identify victims of abuse or neglect and get them and their families the help they need to ensure every child is safe and nurtured in a loving home.

In most cases, early intervention enables children who have been mistreated to remain in their homes while DCFS provides them and their families with supportive services. In fact, of the more than 106,000 allegations of abuse investigated by DCFS last year, only about 4 percent of children were taken into protective custody. And even when allegations of abuse or neglect are unfounded, reports enable DCFS to connect families with voluntary programs and services like domestic violence counseling or drug treatment to prevent an existing risk of harm from becoming real.

The new [Manual for Mandated Reporters](#) developed by DCFS this fall can help answer questions about rights and responsibilities regarding child abuse investigations. Developed in partnership with educators, law enforcement and child abuse experts, the [DCFS Online Training](#) also serves as an excellent resource.

Rules and Waivers

Invitation to Comment on Rules

A set of proposed amendments recently reviewed by the Illinois State Board of Education is available for public comment. The proposal has been posted on the agency's Web site at <http://www.isbe.net/rules>; choose "Proposed

Rules and Amendments." Please submit any comments or suggestions to rules@isbe.net.

Part 226 (Special Education): Would eliminate the definition of "general education classroom" for the purpose of determining class sizes, as well as the class size restrictions for self-contained special education classrooms. A section addressing class sizes for school years 2007-08 and 2008-09 also is being repealed since its provisions no longer apply.

Public comment period ends April 22, 2013.

Illinois Wind for Schools

Application Process Under Way for Second Year of ILWFS Program

The Illinois Wind for Schools (ILWFS) program is accepting applications from highly motivated middle school and high school teachers in Illinois public school districts. Three to five middle and/or high schools are selected each academic year as ILWFS partner schools for intensive support through on-site teacher training and classroom resources. Those who are sincerely interested in incorporating wind energy into their curriculum and providing outreach to their community are encouraged to apply by March 1, 2013.

Illinois Wind for Schools applications to participate during the 2013-14 school year are available at www.ilwfs.org. Eligible disciplines include math, science, agriculture, industrial technology, engineering and related subject disciplines. An open-enrollment generalized workshop will be available to all schools who wish to incorporate wind energy into their curriculum. Schools selected for the program will be notified by April 2.

This initiative, made possible through Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) grant funding, is sponsored through a partnership with the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) at Western Illinois University, the College of Business and Technology at Western Illinois University, the Center for Renewable Energy at Illinois State University and the College of Education at Illinois State University.

For more information regarding the Illinois Wind for Schools program, contact Jolene Willis at (309) 298-2835 or Matt Aldeman at (309) 438-1440, or visit www.ilwfs.org.

In Brief

Student Opportunities

- Students and parents can participate in the **Big Ten Virtual College Fair**, which is scheduled for 1-9 p.m. CST on Feb. 28 at CollegeWeekLive.com. The event includes the opportunity to chat with admission experts and students. For more information, visit http://www.collegeweeklive.com/en_CA/Guest/BigTen-Virtual-College-Fair.
- Illinois Partners for Clean Air have launched the **Shoot for the Skies PSA Video Contest** for Chicago area high school students. Students are asked to create a public service announcement about Chicago area air quality and actions to improve it. For more information, go to www.cleantheair.org. The deadline for entries is March 15.
- The **National World War II Museum** is seeking entries for its annual essay contests for middle school and high school students. This year's theme asks, "How can people who disagree still work together for victory?" The deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. March 29. For more information, visit <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/essaycontests>.

Educator Opportunities

- **Illinois Computing Educators (ICE)** will hold its annual conference Feb. 28 at Pheasant Run Resort and Conference Center in St. Charles. Read more about the presenters and sessions, which are targeted to the needs of districts and school leaders, at <http://www.iceberg.org/leadership>.
- The 45th annual **Illinois Reading Council Conference**, Literacy for Life, is scheduled for March 14-16 in Springfield. For more information, visit www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org. Read about the IRC's new statewide reading initiative Illinois Reads at www.illinoisreads.org.
- Registration for the spring sessions of **The Stock Market Game Program** for grade 4-12 teachers and their students is open through March 1. For more information, including a schedule for teacher training onsite workshops and online webinars, visit Econ Illinois at www.econed-il.org/icee/smg.shtml.

Weekly News Clips

- The Illinois State Board of Education has posted highlights from recent **education news clips** at <http://www.isbe.net/news/2013/newsclips/130225.htm>.

Employment Opportunities

- An **External Vacancy List for ISBE** is available at <http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm>.