



Weekly Message

March 2, 2015

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

I want to thank all of you for your leadership in preparing your local education communities for our initial implementation of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment. Next week the spring testing window officially opens for the Performance-Based Assessment portion of the PARCC, although some Illinois schools have already completed it and several others will begin this week.

Any time we have a major system change like we are implementing, there are bound to be issues. Testing has been in progress in several PARCC states for several weeks now; to date more than 525,000 tests have been started throughout the PARCC states and 348,000 have been completed. There have been some challenges, but so far testing continues with no major problems.

Last week I had the opportunity to speak with Richard Ross, superintendent of public instruction in Ohio, where PARCC testing began last month. He said the testing was going better than they had expected, while acknowledging challenges. He did say that those districts that spent time on the front end, especially those that were using the online platform, experienced far fewer problems than those that did not. This was also the first online implementation of the state test in Ohio.

We have worked together to minimize issues and I appreciate all of your efforts – including more than 12,000 of you who have attended some of the 50-plus webinars we have hosted in preparing for this initial PARCC assessment. The 2015 PARCC Communication Plan, arranged by topic and point of contact, is available at www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2015/parcc/parcc-comm-plan-15.pdf to assist schools and districts with questions during test administration. This document includes Additional Resources, a map of Learning Technology Centers (LTC) and contact information.

Pearson’s PARCC Help Desk can be reached toll-free at (888) 493-9888, by email at parcc@support.pearson.com, and/or by online chat at [PANext](http://panext.pearson.com) if there are technology issues that require assistance. All test-related information can be found at <http://parcc.pearson.com/#>. A PARCC Technology Bulletin – Hot Topics Quick Guide dated Feb. 17 addresses common local technology issues and their resolutions. The bulletin, which also includes PARCC Help Desk contact information, is available at <http://parcc.pearson.com/bulletins/2015/02/17/parcc-technology-bulletin-hot-topics.html>.

A couple of other points to consider this week as you prepare:

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- Establish an internal communication plan. Be sure that you have a protocol for test administrators who have questions during test day.
- Double check your student data.
- For online testing, set up your test sessions and add your test administrators into PearsonAccess Next.
- For paper testing, assure that all your testing materials have arrived. You can always place an additional order in PearsonAccess Next, if you need to.

We have also developed a letter for you to use with your local school communities to provide them with more information about the PARCC testing. You may access this parent letter at www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/parcc/parcc-supt-letter-0315.pdf and use as you feel necessary. Feel free to send it directly from ISBE or personalize it to come from your local district.

Additionally, I know that some of you have had questions about the use of data. We have developed a couple of fact sheets that provide information on the type of data we collect and how it is used. You may access these fact sheets at www.isbe.net/privacy.htm#student.

Finally, I'd like to share a video with you from the staff at Skokie School District 68. It's at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Colt59pKbzk&feature=youtu.be. Mike Flood, Andy Carpenter, Bryan Kelly and A.J. Pomponi do a wonderful job with an instructional video for students on how to prepare physically and mentally for the PARCC test.

Please take a look and enjoy.
Chris

Upcoming ISBE Dates and Deadlines

Please note this is not a complete list of events, meetings 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>.

- **ISBE-Funded ACT Plus Writing** – March 3; makeup March 17 (www.isbe.net/assessment/act.htm)
- **ISBE-Funded ACT WorkKeys** – March 4; makeup March 18 (www.isbe.net/assessment/act.htm)
- **Illinois Social Science Standards Revision Task Force meeting** – March 6
- **Deadline for 2015 Illinois Fatherhood Initiative (IFI) Chicago White Sox Fatherhood Essay Contest** – March 6
- **Truants' Alternative and Optional Education program Request for Proposal bidders' conference webinar** – March 12 (<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1754266768509857793>)
- **2015 Illinois Arts Education Week** – March 16-22
- **Third annual Illinois 5Essentials survey administration extension date** – March 20 (<http://illinois.5-essentials.org>)
- **Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) testing window** – March 23-May 1
- **Part 650 (Charter Schools) and Part 1105 (Procurement by the State Board of Education)** – Public comment period ends March 23
- **Deadline to complete the new teacher evaluation system survey** – March 24 (www.surveymonkey.com/s/PEACImpSur)

- “Teacher Leadership: Learning Forward with Maddie Fennell” event – April 2 (www.eventbrite.com/e/teacher-leadership-learning-forward-with-maddie-fennell-tickets-15739229459)
- PARCC Diagnostic Field Test – April 6-17
- Part 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing), Part 120 (Pupil Transportation Reimbursement), Part 151 (School Construction Program), Part 365 (Children’s Low-cost Laptop Program), Part 525 (Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Services), New Part 525 (Intermediate Services) and Part 560 (Parental Participation Pilot Program) – Public comment period ends April 13
- Eighth annual Illinois School Wellness Conference – April 23
- Deadline to submit the Truants’ Alternative and Optional Educational program Request for Proposal and continuation application – April 28
- Spring 2015 PARCC ELA/L Field Test Administration – May 4-June 5
- TECH 2015 student showcase – May 7
- ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day – May 25
- Deadline to submit nomination forms for the 2016 Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year program – June 8 (www.isbe.net/those-who-excel/pdfs/those-who-excel-app.pdf)
- Deadline to submit data in the Student Health Data –Vision system - June 30
- ISBE offices closed for Independence Day – July 3
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in fall 2015 – Friday, Aug. 14, 2015 (See www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm for public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)

Illinois 5Essentials Survey

ISBE Extends 5Essentials Survey Administration Window to March 20

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has extended the administration window for its annual 5Essentials Survey to March 20.

The 5Essentials Survey, a diagnostic tool developed by researchers at the University of Chicago, provides schools with fine-grained data on five leading indicators for school improvement: Effective Leaders, Collaborative Teachers, Involved Families, Supportive Environment and Ambitious Instruction.

All district schools, including alternative schools that fall under the district’s domain, are required by legislation to participate in the survey at least every other year. In 2015, only districts participating in Race to the Top and those that did not participate in the survey last year will be required to participate by ISBE. Chicago District 299 will also require its schools to participate. All districts will have the option to participate and are strongly encouraged to do so.

Survey results will be released in May to principals and superintendents. A summary of the 5Essential

results will be reported publicly on the State School Report Card website at <http://illinoisreportcard.com>. Detailed survey reports will also be publicly released. Survey results for 2014 and beyond will be normed using the 2013 statewide results so that all schools can demonstrate progress over time on the survey measures.

For more information, visit <http://illinois.5-essentials.org>, email 5essentials@uchicago.edu or call (866) 440-1874.

ACT

ACT Weather Policy Reminder

Per ACT testing guidelines, if an emergency on test day (e.g., tornado, fire, snow) forces the termination of testing or the closing of school, school districts must notify ACT as soon as possible.

Districts should protect the security of the test materials and be especially careful if testing has started. Districts should also call ACT immediately at (800) 553-6244, ext. 2800, to explain their situation.

Decisions regarding rescheduling will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Special Education Services

Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program FY 2016 RFP Webinar

The bidders' conferences for the Truants' Alternative and Optional Education program (TAOEP) Request for Proposal (RFP) will take place through a webinar from 1 to 3 p.m. on Thursday, March 12.

To register for the webinar, go to <https://attendeegotowebinar.com/register/1754266768509857793>.

The deadline for submitting the TAOEP RFP and continuation application is April 28 at 4 p.m. Eligible applicants can find the RFP and continuation application on IWAS beginning March 12. Late applications will not be accepted.

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

System of Support and District Intervention

Grant Readers Sought for School Improvement Grant Competition

ISBE's System of Support and District Intervention Division is seeking grant readers for the fiscal year 2016 School Improvement Grant 1003(g) competition.

Preferred grant readers should have school or district administrative experience, expertise in school improvement (transformation and reform), previous grant writing and reading experience, program management and experience working with low-performing schools and districts serving specialized populations such as early childhood, students with special needs and linguistically and culturally diverse English Learners. Grant readers should also be familiar with the new School Improvement Grant 1003(g) final requirements as published on the U.S. Department of Education website at www.federalregister.gov/articles/2015/02/09/2015-02570/final-requirements-school-improvement-grants-title-i-of-the-elementary-and-secondary-education-act.

Readers will be required to participate in a half-day training that will be delivered via webinar in May and a one-day inter-rater reliability face-to-face training session. Readers are also expected to be available in the first half of June to read and score their assigned Request for Proposal (RFP) applications, which will be sent to the readers through a web-based system. Access to a computer with Internet capability and technology literacy will be necessary. An honorarium based on the number of reviews completed on time will be provided. Once selected, readers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement, a memorandum of understanding and complete a conflict of interest questionnaire.

Candidates should send a letter of interest detailing contact information and qualifications in the areas listed above along with a resume or curriculum vitae by April 1 to Rae Clementz, principal consultant, Illinois State Board of Education, System of Support and District Intervention Division, 100 N. First St., Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001 or via email at aclement@isbe.net.

Contact Clementz with questions at (217) 524-4832.

Data Analysis and Accountability

Employment Information Systems Virtual Course Now Live

In an effort to assist districts with the Employment Information System (EIS), ISBE has developed "EIS Basics," an introductory virtual training course designed to explain the basic functions of data entry in the system. This course is wonderful for beginner data entry staff and is also a great refresher for returning users who would like to understand new changes and functions within the system.

The course is currently in development, and the first three lessons are now available online. Each lesson is presented with a video and written guide for reference.

This course covers:

- Getting Acquainted with EIS (now live)
- Adding an Employee, Position and Work Location Online (now live)

- Adding an Employee, Position and Work Location Using Batch Uploads (now live)
- Adding a Salary Online (coming soon)
- Adding a Salary Using Batch Uploads (coming soon)
- Edit/Remove/End an Employee Online (coming soon)
- Data Cleanup using Dashboard and Reports (coming soon)

To ask questions or make suggestions for the course, call the EIS Help Desk at (217) 782-3950 or email datahelp@isbe.net. For technical assistance, please contact the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600.

Performance Evaluation Advisory Council

Survey Available to Collect Feedback on New Teacher Evaluation Systems

The Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) requires Illinois districts to adopt new teacher evaluation systems that address teacher performance and student growth. To assess districts' challenges in implementing their new evaluation system, ISBE and the Performance Evaluation Advisory Council (PEAC) contracted with American Institutes for Research to conduct a survey.

The purpose of the survey is to collect anonymous data from Illinois school districts on the challenges encountered during the design and implementation of their new teacher evaluation systems, in accordance with PERA requirements. Your responses will help PEAC and ISBE identify district needs and address those needs through potential resources and supports.

The survey link (www.surveymonkey.com/s/PEACImpSur) will also be sent to district superintendents and union leaders.

Superintendents and union leaders (or designees) are asked to complete the survey and then forward the link to other members of the district committee that studies, reviews, informs and/or makes decisions regarding the teacher evaluation system.

The survey will close on March 24. Please contact Vince Camille at vcamille@isbe.net with questions.

Rules and Waivers

Invitation to Comment on Rules

Three sets of proposed amendments, a set of proposed rules and three proposed repealers recently reviewed by ISBE are available for public comment. The proposals have been posted on the agency's website at www.isbe.net/rules; choose "Proposed Rules and Amendments." Please submit any comments or suggestions to rules@isbe.net.

Part 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing):

Provides an accounting code for the federal Race to the Top Preschool Development Grant Program, needed for recipients to prepare applications and report on the use of the funds; updates the auditing standards specified at Section 100.20; and adds an expenditure code for charter schools.

Public Comment period ends April 13, 2015.

Part 120 (Pupil Transportation Reimbursement):

Responds to P.A. 98-1057, effective Jan. 1, 2015, that allows for reimbursement of transportation costs of parents of students in City of Chicago School District 299 under certain circumstances.

Public Comment period ends April 13, 2015.

Part 151 (School Construction Grant): Responds to P.A. 98-710, effective July 16, 2014, that adds special education cooperatives as eligible applicants for school maintenance grants under the School Construction Program.

Public Comment period ends April 13, 2015.

Part 365 (Children's Low-cost Laptop Program): Proposes the Part for repeal since statutory authority for the program no longer exists.

Public Comment period ends April 13, 2015.

Part 525 (Intermediate Services): This new Part responds to several pieces of legislation enacted since 2009 that re-focused the work of the advisory boards, eliminated the suburban Cook County Regional Office of Education and its advisory board, and transferred responsibility of the delivery of intermediate services to the suburban Intermediate Service Centers.

Public Comment period ends April 13, 2015.

Part 525 (Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Services): Proposes the Part for repeal to be replaced with new Part 525.
Public Comment period ends April 13, 2015.

Part 560 (Parental Participation Pilot Program): Proposes the Part for repeal since statutory authority for the program no longer exists.
Public Comment period ends April 13, 2015.

Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that a set of emergency amendments and two regular rulemakings recently adopted by ISBE are now in effect. Changes have been posted at www.isbe.net/rules/archive/default.htm. Please choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to the Part number.

Part 26 (Endorsements in Early Childhood Education and in Elementary Education): Proposes new standards that articulate the knowledge and skills in several areas, including English language arts and mathematics, needed for receipt of the early childhood endorsement and to which educator preparation programs and content-area tests must align.
Affected Sections: 26.100, 26.110, 26.120, 26.125, 26.130, 26.135, 26.140, 26.150, 26.240 and 26.245
Effective Date: Feb. 2, 2015

Part 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing) EMERGENCY: Provides an accounting code for the federal Race to the Top Preschool Development Grant Program, needed for recipients to prepare applications and report on the use of the funds.
Affected Sections: 100.130 and Table C
Effective Date: Feb. 11, 2015

Part 375 (Student Records): Proposes a technical change to remind school districts to designate on a student’s academic transcript, which is part of the student’s permanent record, his or her receipt of the State Seal of Biliteracy or the State Commendation Toward Biliteracy; reiterates the need for school districts to retain the copy of a student’s certified birth certificate or other relevant documentation in the student’s permanent record; and acknowledges the change in the statutory citation for the state

assessments. (See P.A. 98-972, effective Aug. 15, 2014)
Affected Sections: 375.10
Effective Date: Feb. 2, 2015

Illinois Virtual School

Illinois Virtual School Offers New Online Professional Development Course

The Illinois Virtual School is offering a new online professional development course, “Teaching in a Blended Learning Model,” until April 30.

This free, self-paced course was designed for teachers who are new to blended learning and want to discover strategies to optimize instruction. Participants will earn 10 professional development clock hours for successful completion.

Go to <https://pd.ilvirtual.org> to select a start date and enroll.

Nutrition and Wellness Programs

8th Annual School Wellness Conference Scheduled for April 23 in Champaign

Illinois Action for Healthy Kids is hosting the eighth annual School Wellness Conference on April 23 in Champaign.

Conference sessions will highlight successful school health and wellness-related outreach in schools, innovative projects that improve the overall health of the school community and emerging issues affecting school health and wellness.

The event targets school administrators, physical education teachers, school food personnel, school nurses, school health/wellness team members, board members and other leaders of healthcare organizations, students/learners, educators, community advocates and child care providers.

“Early bird” registration costs \$75 and ends March 15. Standard registration is \$100 and ends April 17. The registration fee includes continental breakfast, lunch, conference materials and raffle prizes.

Register online at www.actionforhealthykids.org/events/event/236.

For more information or questions, contact Ryan Monroe, Illinois state coordinator, at rmonroe@actionforhealthykids.org.

- **What:** Illinois School Wellness Conference
- **When:** April 23, 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Hilton Garden Inn, 1501 S. Neil St., in Champaign
- **Register:**
www.actionforhealthykids.org/events/event/236

Illinois P-20 Council

Free Teacher Leadership Event Scheduled for April 2 at Illinois State University

Educators are invited to learn more about the power of teacher leadership during a free event April 2 at the Illinois State University Bone Student Center.

Maddie Fennel, a U.S. Department of Education teacher ambassador and the 2007 Nebraska Teacher of the Year, will present on the Teach to Lead initiative and share stories of teacher leadership from across the nation. Annice Brave, a National Teacher of the Year finalist and the 2011 Illinois Teacher of the Year, will also speak.

The event goes from 6 to 8 p.m. For more information and to register, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/teacher-leadership-learning-forward-with-maddie-fennel-tickets-15739229459.

The Illinois P-20 Teacher and Leader Effectiveness Committee organized the event, with ISBE as a co-sponsor.

School Health Issues

ISBE Sexual Health Education Online Training Now Closed

ISBE's Sexual Health Education Online Training, which is provided through Centers for Disease Control (CDC) funding, is now closed to additional participants.

Agency staff hopes that additional funds will become available in fiscal year 2016 so the course may be offered again next school year.

Illinois Network of Charter Schools

Starting a Charter School Webinar Scheduled for March 11

The Illinois Network of Charter Schools is hosting a webinar on how to start a charter school from 4 to 5:30 p.m. March 11.

Participants will learn about charter public schools and what it takes to start a charter in their own community.

For more information and to register, go to <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1479922124731542273> or contact Anne Levy Brown at alevybrown@incschools.org.

In Brief

School Safety

- A symposium is scheduled for March 31 and April 2 at the Homeland Security Education Center at the College of DuPage to educate non-criminal justice users about the **Illinois State Police and Federal Bureau of Investigation Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) programs**. The Illinois State Police's Bureau of Identification has partnered with the Suburban Law Enforcement Academy (College of DuPage) and the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police to put on the event on both dates. In order to protect children, the elderly and people with disabilities, it is important that non-criminal justice CHRI users make good hiring and licensing decisions regarding potential child care providers, health care workers, local governmental, school and retail employees as well as general employment staff. More information is available at www.isbe.net/pdf/fbi-isp-symposium.pdf. The registration deadline for either session date is March 20.

Grant Opportunities

- The Illinois School Library Media Association/Library Book Selection Service Endowment Fund announces its **2015-16 Readers' Choice Grant**. All Illinois libraries registered in any of the Illinois Readers' Choice programs are eligible to apply. More information is available online at www.lbssfund.org. The online application form will be available starting March 15. All grant

applications must be submitted by midnight April 30. Applicants must also be registered for the appropriate 2015-16 Readers' Choice program by April 30 (a separate process). Call (309) 341-1099 or email SLMAexsec@gmail.com with questions.

Student Opportunities

- The **Energy Education Council (EEC)** and **Illinois Broadcasters Association** are co-sponsoring a new contest to help raise awareness about outdoor electrical safety in Illinois. The "Safe Electricity High School Challenge" gives high school students the opportunity to create video content for an EEC educational campaign. Teams or individual students are asked to design and produce a short television public service announcement. Up to five winning entries will be named, with cash prizes for the creators and sponsoring high school. Students or teams of students must have a faculty sponsor and register by 5 p.m. on May 15, 2015, to participate in the contest. Registration information and other details are available at <http://bit.ly/hsChallenge>.

Professional Development

- The **Illinois Association of Aggregate Producers' (IAAP) Illinois Teachers Workshop** is a three-day event designed to inform Illinois educators about the importance of rocks, minerals, and mining in everyday life. The IAAP has partnered with the Illinois Science Teachers' Association to put on the event, which is scheduled for July 13-15 at Brehm Preparatory School in Carbondale. A registration form detailing workshop fees is available for download at www.iaap-aggregates.org/workshop.htm.
- Registration is open for **Wired Wednesday Webinars**, a unique collaboration that focuses on the Common Core State Standards in speaking and listening. The Illinois Reading Council has partnered with the Wisconsin State Reading Association to provide the webinars. All webinars begin at 7 p.m. For more information or to register, please visit www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org or call (888) 454-1341. Upcoming presenters include:
 - Doug Fisher: Collaborative Conversations and the Speaking and Listening Standards on March 17.

- Matt Copeland: Facilitating Student Discussion with Socratic Circles on April 15.

Employment Opportunities

- Watch for vacancy lists and find instructions for applying on ISBE's Human Resources webpage at <http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm>.