



**March 3, 2009**

### Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The federal stimulus and our state budget continue to be major issues on the minds of everyone involved in education these days. Last week, I met with the Illinois Association of School Administrators’ legislative advisory committee, specifically to discuss these issues. I know that you have many questions, and unfortunately at this point in time, we do not have a lot of answers.

Last Wednesday, I was in Washington D.C., with my counterparts from other states to discuss the stimulus package with Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. Secretary Duncan emphasized the four criteria he wants to see addressed with the stimulus funds application, which is required to be submitted through the Office of the Governor:

- 1) college and career-ready standards and assessments;
- 2) comprehensive data systems;
- 3) the distribution of quality teachers and overall improvements towards teacher effectiveness; and
- 4) improving the state’s lowest-performing schools.

Additionally, Vice-President Joe Biden met with us. He reiterated the need for all states to maintain and track the stimulus funds separately from all other state and federal funding and that there will be a high degree of accountability for the use of the stimulus funds. The Vice-President told the state education chiefs in the room that if there is any instance of misuse of any of these funds, he personally will come to the state and local education agency in question, and make an example of the misuse of funds in front of the national media. The Vice-President also put the federal stimulus package into historical perspective for us, explaining that we have never in the past seen, nor may we ever again see, an infusion of federal funds into education like we are seeing now. So we must set clear goals and be able to demonstrate achievement with these funds.

The U.S. Department of Education should be issuing additional guidance on the federal stimulus package later this week. When we get information that is applicable to local districts, we will post it to our Web site at <http://www.isbe.net/arra/default.htm>.

Congratulations to the 989 schools that made the Illinois Honor Roll this year! The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) and the Interactive Report Card (IIRC) at NIU are rolling out the 2008 Illinois Honor Roll at <http://www.ilhonorroll.niu.edu/>.

It takes major commitments from students, staff and the community to make the honor roll and all of these schools deserve our appreciation for their dedication to academic excellence. These schools represent 345 districts from all regions of Illinois.

Suburban schools represent 43 percent of the Illinois Honor Roll, 40 percent are downstate schools and 17 percent come from the Chicago Public Schools. Nearly 100 schools are being recognized for their 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> consecutive year.

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ISBE and the IIRC work together to create the Illinois Honor Roll, which is divided into three categories:

- Spotlight Schools – Recognizes 499 high-poverty, high-performing schools that are beating the odds to overcoming the achievement gap,
- Academic Excellence Awards – 388 schools have sustained high performance over at least three years,
- Academic Improvement Awards – 153 schools are showing substantial gains over three years.

Congratulations to all of our Honor Roll schools and best of luck to everyone as we begin the 2009 testing cycle this week.

Thanks for all you do for our kids!

Chris

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## Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- Receipt deadline for schools to submit PS&E 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 deadline for districts/schools to enter orders – 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
- Preschool for All Children Ages 3 to 5 Years RFP – April 21
- Prevention Initiative Birth to Age 3 Years RFP – May 19

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## Student Assessment

### 2009 ISAT Grade 6 Mathematics Reader Scripts

There is a printing error in the grade 6 mathematics reader script. Page 10 of the reader script does not appear between pages 9 and 11. Rather, page 10 appears between pages 44 and 45.

#### Session 1:

After you have read page 9 to students, go to page 10 which is located between pages 44 and 45. Page 10 contains questions 1 and 2. After reading page 10 to the students, return to page 11 to continue reading test questions, beginning with question 3.

#### Session 2:

Ignore page 10 when reading session 2 to students.

### 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](http://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.

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## Student Information System

### Academic Transcripts

Please note that last September the State Board revised its rules so that a student's unique student identifier number as assigned and used by the Student Information System (SIS) is required to be included on a student's transcript. This will facilitate the State Board's critical effort to allow for effective linkages to higher education.

As you prepare student transcripts this spring, please be sure to include the student's assigned SIS unique identification number. If you have any questions about this requirement, please contact **Connie Wise**, Assistant Superintendent, at [cwise@isbe.net](mailto:cwise@isbe.net) or 217-782-0354.

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## IDPH

### Preventing Diarrheal Illnesses in Schools

When increased reports of diarrheal illnesses occur in schools and day cares, it is important for school administrators to review the basic prevention and control measures outlined by the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH):

- Request that students and staff report any diarrheal illness to the nurse's office or the school's designee at the first sign of symptoms;
- Ask that students and employees with diarrhea (if thought to be infectious in nature) not attend school until diarrhea has ceased;
- Maintain adequate supplies of liquid soap and paper towels for hand washing with adequate waste receptacles near sinks;

- Display posters explaining hand washing in bathrooms and other hand wash areas. Schools can obtain materials on hand washing from the local health department or IDPH at <http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/fdd/HandWash2.pdf>.
- Remind students to perform proper hand washing, supervise and assist younger children as needed, and be a model for proper hand washing for students and co-workers;
- Consider using alcohol-based hand hygiene products when hand washing sinks are not nearby and hands are not visibly soiled. Dispensers, hand rubs and related products can be used if they comply with school code requirements. Alcohol-based hand gels reduce the amount of germs on hands but do not remove dirt; and
- Discourage use of common food bowls or shared servings of food items that can be ingested.

These measures, if applied, can reduce the transmission of illnesses in schools and day cares. Your assistance is greatly appreciated in applying illness management practices.

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## Early Childhood

### Preschool for All Children Ages 3 to 5 Years RFP Released

The Preschool for All Children Ages 3 to 5 Years – 2010 Request for Proposals (RFP) for new funds has been released. Applicants eligible to submit a proposal for this preschool education program serving 3- to 5-year-olds include public school districts, community-based agencies, child care centers and others.

Applicants other than public school districts must provide evidence of existing competencies to provide early childhood education programs. The Preschool for All Children program expands the number of young children able to receive high-quality preschool education by focusing not only on children who are determined to be at risk of academic failure but also by serving families of low to moderate income whose children are not considered to be at risk academically and other families that choose to participate.

Continuing providers will find the application process for this year's expansion very similar to the process of applying for expanded grants in years past.

The RFP is available online at <http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/preschool/default.htm>.

The RFP can also be obtained by contacting the Early Childhood Division at 217-524-4835.

Preschool for All Children bidders' conferences will be held for this RFP. Attendance at a bidders' conference is recommended but is not required. Registration prior to the bidders' conference is not required. Security procedures require photo identification for entry at each location.

#### **Springfield - Monday, March 23**

- 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- Prairie Capital Convention Center
- 1 Convention Center Plaza
- Lower Level, Meeting Room B-11
- Parking Ramp at 7<sup>th</sup> & Washington

#### **Chicago Heights - Tuesday, March 31**

- 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- Prairie State College
- 202 South Halsted Street
- Auditorium
- Park in Lot D

Should the conditions of this RFP change as a result of the bidders' conference, the State Board of Education will notify all recipients of the RFP of the changes.

### **Prevention Initiative Birth to Age 3 Years RFP Released**

The Prevention Initiative Birth to Age 3 Years – 2010 Request for Proposals (RFP) for new funds has been released. This RFP is for Prevention Initiative programs offering coordinated services to at-risk children and their families. Public school districts, university laboratory schools approved by the State Board of Education, charter schools, area vocational centers and other entities are eligible to submit a proposal. Applicants other than public school districts must provide evidence of existing competencies to provide early childhood education programs.

The RFP is available online at <http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/birth-3.htm>.

The RFP can also be obtained by contacting the Early Childhood Division at 217-524-4835.

Prevention Initiative bidders' conferences will be held for this RFP. Attendance at a bidders' conference is recommended but is not required. Security procedures require photo identification for entry at each location.

#### **Springfield - Tuesday, March 24**

- 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- Prairie Capital Convention Center
- 1 Convention Center Plaza
- Lower Level, Meeting Room B-11
- Parking Ramp at 7<sup>th</sup> & Washington

#### **Chicago Heights - Wednesday, April 1**

- 1:30 to 3:30 p.m.
- Prairie State College
- 202 South Halsted Street
- Auditorium
- Park in Lot D

Should the conditions of this RFP change as a result of the bidders' conference, the State Board of Education will notify all recipients of the RFP of the changes.

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## **Legal**

### **G.I.S. Venture et al. v. Novak**

A recent Illinois appellate court case confirmed the State Board's long-standing position regarding permanent transfers from the working cash fund. In *G.I.S. Venture*, the Second District held that a school district could not abate its working cash fund and permanently transfer said money to its operations and maintenance (O & M) fund; repayment was required. *G.I.S. Venture et al. v. Novak*, \_\_\_ N.E.2d \_\_\_, 2009 WL 332872 (2d Dist. No. 2-07-0934).

A school district abated its working cash fund by permanently transferring bond proceeds to its O & M fund during the 1998-99 fiscal year. The district stated in its resolution that the board's intention was to set aside the funds to be used later to build and equip additions and to repair and improve existing buildings. The district then extended a 1999 tax levy for educational purposes at the maximum rate. A taxpayer objection was filed which argued that the transfer to O & M should have gone to the education fund.

The court agreed, finding that nothing in the School Code or case law supported the practice of permanently transferring working cash directly to O & M. Sections 20-5, 20-9 and 17-2A of the School Code could not be

construed to allow such a practice. Further, the Second District was clear that the Illinois Supreme Court’s 1984 decision in the *Walgenbach* case did not interpret Section 20-9 to authorize a permanent transfer where working cash was abated, much less address to which funds the money might be transferred. *In re Application of Walgenbach*, 104 Ill.2d 121 (1984).

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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 rulemakings incorporates new statutory language while the other sets forth requirements for a competitive grant program for professional development in reading instruction (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 235 (Early Childhood Block Grant)

Extended the “sunset” date for the Preschool for All Children Program from June 30, 2008, to June 30, 2010.

**Affected Sections:** 235.100

**Effective Date:** February 23, 2009

#### Part 260 (Reading Improvement Block Grant)

Establishes requirements for grants to pay for the cost of establishing or participating in programs for professional development in reading instruction for staff in schools serving kindergarten through grade 6 students.

**Affected Sections:** 260.100, 260.120, 260.130, and 260.140

**Effective Date:** February 23, 2009

### 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](mailto:wtuthill@isbe.net) or call at 217-782-5270.

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## Grants & Programs

### Homeless Education Grant Awards

The State Board has awarded grants to 29 school districts under the Education of Homeless Children and Youth State Grant Program. Applicants eligible to apply included school districts, public university laboratory schools approved by the State Board and charter schools.

Each applicant was required to show sufficient need for the program as evidenced by the number or proportion of students identified as eligible for program services. Proof was presented of the applicant’s inability to adequately meet the needs of its homeless children and youth without the additional assistance provided pursuant to the state homeless program.

School districts can use the funds awarded for the 16 activities that carry out the purpose of the federal Education of Homeless Children and Youth program. This includes enabling homeless children and youth to achieve stability within regular education programs in order to reach the same challenging state content and student performance standards to which all children and youths are held. The activities and services should address ways to involve parents and a plan to include the community in the program.

The grant period extends through **June 30**. Funding will be available for two additional years contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program in subsequent fiscal years and satisfactory performance by the grantee in the preceding fiscal year.

The districts awarded the grants can be found at <http://www.isbe.net/homeless/default.htm>.

The contact person for this grant is **Sharon Neely**, Curriculum and Instruction, 217-557-7323 or by e-mail [sneely@isbe.net](mailto:sneely@isbe.net).

### 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](mailto:sveach@isbe.net) or 217-524-4832.

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## Professional Development

### Understanding & Addressing Cyberbullying

Please join the Anti-Defamation League for a workshop for school administrators on cyberbullying on **Thursday, April 2**, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Seyfarth Shaw law firm in Chicago.

Topics covered include “trickery, trolling and threats” on the Internet.

- Understand how cyberbullying occurs.
- Learn strategies for empowering students.
- Foster an increased culture of e-safety.
- Explore key legal and constitutional issues.
- Examine appropriate school responses.

The workshop is free, but space is limited. Participants must RSVP by **Monday, March 30**, to **Jeremy** at 312-782-5080 x 223 or [jbooten@adl.org](mailto:jbooten@adl.org).

The workshop is funded by Symantec Corporation and CPDUs are available.

### The High School Challenge: A Push & Pull Journey

The Coalition for Illinois High Schools presents its fourth annual high school conference on **June 15 and 16** at the Double Tree Hotel in Bloomington.

The High School Challenge: A Push & Pull Journey is designed for those involved with Illinois high schools. The purpose of the conference is to provide educators with the tools they need to prepare students for the world in which they live and work. Breakout sessions include national, state and local initiatives, curriculum & instruction and tools and technology.

Featured speakers include Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, Dr. Bobb Darnell, Dr. Robert Lynn Canady, Dr. Christopher Koch and Dr. Todd Flaherty among others.

For registration information, contact the Illinois High School Association at 309-663-6377 or [tcraig@ihsa.org](mailto:tcraig@ihsa.org).

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## 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/WFPresitem11385.html>.

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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/090227.htm>

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