



March 3, 2014

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week, several members of the State Board and I testified before the Senate Appropriations Committee, which has responsibility for K-12 funding. Many members were very supportive of what you do in the field every day and recognize the impact of the state’s financial crisis on schools.

It is still early in the budget-making process, but we must remember that the temporary income tax is set to expire midway through the fiscal year. The House passed a resolution establishing an overall General Funds revenue estimate about \$950 million lower than the Fiscal Year 14 revenue estimates. In addition, there are unconfirmed reports that this could mean substantial reductions to education as other pressure areas in the budget increase. We will continue to monitor and advocate for the Board’s recommended budget, but we must face the reality that this process will, again, be an uphill battle.

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Recently, a number of questions have come up regarding whether or not a teacher can choose to administer the ISAT or whether a student can “opt out” of taking it. Last week, teachers at two schools in the Chicago Public Schools district said they will not administer the test, and a number of parents say they want their students to opt out. There is no opt out provision, and the ISAT will provide valuable information to educators, parents and the community, particularly during this transition year to the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment. Board Chairman Gery Chico and I are very concerned about the misinformation regarding this requirement and sent a letter to the CPS Chief Executive outlining our concerns, district responsibilities and possible repercussions. The letter is posted on our website at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/pdfs/2014/isat/isbe-cps299-isat-ltr-14.pdf>.

Soon, we will begin our field test of the new PARCC assessment. Currently, more than 1,800 schools in about 670 districts have signed up to take this practice test. The practice tests will give students the chance to try out the new testing format before it counts and will help test designers determine the fairness, validity and accuracy of the questions and format.

We have developed a new video that will help you as you engage faculty, students, parents and the community in discussions of the new assessments. The video takes a look at the PARCC assessments and new Illinois Learning Standards. “Improving Student Assessments” explains the keys to PARCC success, which include employing innovation and measuring students’ higher-level thinking abilities. Please feel free to use it in Board meetings, community forums and faculty meetings and also to share

through social media and newsletters. You may access the video at http://www.isbe.net/asx/2014/PARCC_Imp_Student_Assess_022814.asx.

Thanks and have a great week!
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>.

- National School Breakfast Week – March 3-7
- ISAT Testing Window and Modified Regular Testing Window – March 3-14, March 10-21
- International School Meals Day – March 6
- Illinois State Board of Education Meeting – March 12-13
- Illinois 5Essentials Survey – To be conducted March 17 through April 25
- Arts and Foreign Language Planning Assistance Grant Deadline – April 14
- 2014 Statewide Suicide Prevention Conference – April 25 (<http://ipha.com/Public/Events/EventDetails.aspx?eventId=314>)
- Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) FY 2015 RFP and Continuation Application Deadline – April 28
- Illinois School Wellness Conference – April 30 (<http://bit.ly/ILconf>)
- School Nutrition Employee Week – May 5-9
- National School Nurse Day – May 7 (<http://www.nasn.org/AboutNASN/NationalSchoolNurseDay>)
- Applications for the Exception to the 1.0 Percent Cap due – May 16
- ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day – May 26
- 2014-2015 Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year Nominations Deadline – June 9 (http://www.isbe.net/those_who_excel.htm)
- Student Health Data – Vision system report deadline – June 30
- Student Health Data – Dental system report deadline – June 30
- ISBE offices closed for Independence Day – July 4
- Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Fall 2014 – Friday, August 15, 2014 (See <http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm> for public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)

Assessment

Modified ISAT Testing Window Provided Due to Severe Weather Conditions

Due to the extraordinary weather conditions experienced across the state this winter, ISBE is offering the option for districts to test during the regular ISAT testing window of March 3-14 or during a modified regular testing window, March 10-21.

Testing during the modified window is entirely optional and does not require any special request as it is still considered to be a part of the regular testing window.

All materials for both the regular and modified regular schedule must be ready for pickup by Tuesday, March 25. Early pickup of material may be scheduled.

More guidance related to the modified testing window and pickup options will be available on the Assessment home page at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/default.htm>.

College and Career Readiness

FY 2014 Arts and Foreign Language Planning Assistance Grant Available

The Illinois Arts Council Agency and ISBE are pleased to announce that funding is available for

public school districts in Fiscal Year 2014 with the Arts and Foreign Language Planning Assistance Grant.

The Illinois Arts Council Agency has released the Request for Proposals (RFP), and full guidelines and materials can be found on www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL. The purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals from eligible applicants that seek resources to develop district-based plans for initiating, strengthening or expanding instruction in the arts or foreign language. Proposals are due Monday, April 14.

An online, interactive informational forum about the RFP, designed to provide technical assistance and answer questions about the process, is scheduled for Tuesday, March 18, at 1 p.m. Registration information is posted at www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL.

For more information, contact Jerome Grand at jerome.grand@illinois.gov or (312) 814-6766 or visit www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL.

Title Grant Administration

Consultation with Nonpublic Schools, Local Education Agencies on Title I Funds

Sec. 1120(b) of the No Child Left Behind Act and Sec. 200.63 of the Title I regulations require that timely and meaningful consultation must occur between the Local Education Agency (LEA) and private school officials prior to any decision that affects the opportunities of eligible private school children, teachers and other educational personnel to participate in the Title I program and shall continue throughout the implementation and assessment of activities.

Topics that must be discussed between the LEA and the private school officials are available here: http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/np_partic.htm.

The LEA, during the consultation process, should: set up a timeline with private school officials for future meetings and for frequent visits by the LEA, plan for multiple meetings, gather input from private school representatives, have an agenda for each meeting, keep written notes and share with private school officials, maintain meaningful written assurance and plan to conduct full school year programming.

Consultation is a very important piece of the education process, and it is imperative that discussions take place in a timely manner in order for the students to benefit the most from Title I services. Start now by contacting your nonpublic schools to set this process in motion.

For more information, contact the Title Grants Division at (217) 524-4832.

Nutrition and Wellness Programs

USDA Farm to School Grants Available To Improve Access to Local Foods

The USDA has announced the availability of three different Farm to School Grants as well as a separate funding track to support training and events.

The purpose of the Farm to School Grant Program is to help eligible entities implement farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. The USDA awards up to \$5 million in competitive grants annually for training, supporting operations, planning, purchasing equipment, developing school gardens, developing partnerships and implementing farm to school programs.

Planning grants are available for schools just getting started on farm to school activities. Implementation grants are available for schools seeking to augment or expand existing efforts. Additionally, eligible non-profit entities, Indian tribal organizations, state and local agencies and agriculture producers or groups of producers may apply for support service grants in order to conduct trainings, create complementary curriculum or further develop supply chains, among other activities. Proposals are due on April 30.

New in FY 2015, USDA funds will be made available to support meetings, trainings and events aimed at strengthening farm to school supply chains or providing technical assistance. The Training and Event funds range from \$15,000 to \$50,000. The USDA expects to distribute approximately \$500,000 in additional funds to support at least one statewide or regional meeting in all seven FNS regions and at least one national conference. Letters of Intent are due on April 2.

To assist eligible entities, the USDA will host a series of webinars related to the application process:

- March 11, noon – Planning Grants
- March 12, noon – Implementation Grants
- March 13, noon – Support Service Grants
- March 14, noon – Training and Event Funding Track

For additional information, visit the USDA website at www.fns.usda.gov/farmtoschool/fy-2015-farm-school-grant-program-funds-available.

Annual School Wellness Conference Scheduled for April 30 in Champaign

ISBE and Illinois Action for Healthy Kids are hosting the seventh annual Illinois School Wellness Conference, titled “Every Kid Healthy,” on April 30 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. Featured tracks include: School Nutrition, School Breakfast, Physical Activity, Coordinated School Health and Early Childhood.

The conference is intended for school administrators, educators, physical education teachers, school food personnel, school nurses, school health/wellness team members, board members and other leaders of health organizations, students, childcare providers and community advocates.

The cost is \$50, which includes continental breakfast, lunch, conference materials and raffle prizes. Register online at <http://bit.ly/ILconf>.

- **What:** Illinois School Wellness Conference
- **When:** April 30, 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
- **Where:** Hilton Garden Inn, 1501 S. Neil St., in Champaign

Funding and Disbursements

Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance in IWAS for GSA Claim

The annual “Estimated Best Three Months Average Daily Attendance” application is now available on IWAS. ISBE requests that you provide an estimate of the daily attendance figure for your district to ISBE by Friday, March 7.

The daily attendance figure is your estimate of the best three months of attendance for the 2013-14 school year. You may use actual attendance data to date to calculate an estimate or develop your own estimate figure based on historical attendance patterns.

The estimate you provide will be used by policymakers to determine the General State Aid (GSA) appropriation level for the 2013-14 claim, payable in Fiscal Year 2015. Please note these estimates are only used for projection purposes and will not be used in calculating your district's final GSA claim and payment.

If you have questions about this request, please contact Jim Mathes at jmathes@isbe.net or (217) 782-5256 or Jason Hall at jhall@isbe.net and (217) 782-0249.

Special Education Services

Information on Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program FY 15 RFP

The bidders’ conferences for the Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education program (TAOEP) Request for Proposal (RFP) will be 8:15-10:15 a.m. Friday, March 7, at the Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, Redbird A, 201 Broadway St., in Normal and through a webinar from 1-3 p.m. on Thursday, March 20.

To register for the webinar, go to <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/326746681>.

The deadline for submitting the TAOEP RFP and continuation application is Monday, April 28, at 11:59 p.m. Eligible applicants can find the RFP and continuation application on IWAS beginning March 10. 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 and sveach@isbe.net or vtaylor@isbe.net.

Public Act Changes State-Level Special Education Mediation Process

Effective Aug. 16, 2013, additional regulatory language has been incorporated into the Illinois Compiled Statutes, which impacts the state-level

special education mediation process (see 105 ILCS, 5/14-8.02j) as follows:

(j) During the pendency of any administrative or judicial proceeding conducted pursuant to this Section, including mediation (if the school district or other public entity voluntarily agrees to participate in mediation), unless the school district and the parents or student (if at least 18 years of age or emancipated) otherwise agree, the student shall remain in his or her present educational placement and continue in his or her present eligibility status and special education and related services, if any. If mediation fails to resolve the dispute between the parties, the parent (or student if 18 years of age or older or emancipated) shall have 10 days after the mediation concludes to file a request for a due process hearing in order to continue to invoke the "stay-put" provisions of this subsection (j). If applying for initial admission to the school district, the student shall, with the consent of the parents (if the student is not at least 18 years of age or emancipated), be placed in the school district program until all such proceedings have been completed. The costs for any special education and related services or placement incurred following 60 school days after the initial request for evaluation shall be borne by the school district if the services or placement is in accordance with the final determination as to the special education and related services or placement that must be provided to the child, provided that during that 60 day period there have been no delays caused by the child's parent.

Therefore, the following is now required:

- The agreement of the parties to mediate shall act as a “stay-put” on the child’s placement during the pendency of the mediation. The “stay-put” placement shall be the last agreed-upon placement between the parties.
- If no agreement is reached between the parties concerning the placement, the “stay-put” placement shall remain in effect for a period of 10 calendar days following the mediation.
- If the party challenging the placement that led to the mediation request does not file a request for a due process hearing within 10 days following the unsuccessful mediation, the “stay-put” placement will expire.

Districts/cooperatives are encouraged to review the referenced citation in order to ensure full compliance.

School Health Issues

2014 Statewide Suicide Prevention Conference Set for April 25 in Springfield

Registration is open for the 2014 Statewide Suicide Prevention Conference, entitled “Preventing Suicide Among Youth and Young Adults: Everyone has a Role,” on April 25 in Springfield.

The conference theme acknowledges that preventing suicide involves collaborative efforts by the entire community, with a special focus on youth and young adults between 10 to 24 years of age. Featured speakers include: Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck, director of the Illinois Department of Public Health; Dr. John Draper, director of the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline; and Dr. Peter Gutierrez of the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs.

State law requires that school personnel working with students in middle and high school grades must receive training on suicide (105 ILCS 5/10-22.39):

In-service training programs.

(a) To conduct in-service training programs for teachers.

(b) In addition to other topics at in-service training programs, school guidance counselors, teachers, school social workers, and other school personnel who work with pupils in grades 7 through 12 shall be trained to identify the warning signs of mental illness and suicidal behavior in adolescents and teens and shall be taught appropriate intervention and referral techniques.

The event is sponsored by the Illinois Department of Public Health in conjunction with the Illinois Public Health Association, the University of Illinois Springfield Counseling Center and the Illinois Suicide Prevention Alliance. For more information, go to <http://ipha.com/Public/Events/EventDetails.aspx?eventId=314>.

- **What:** 2014 Statewide Suicide Prevention Conference
- **When:** April 25, 8 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.
- **Where:** University of Illinois Springfield, 2200 Ernest Hemingway Drive, in Springfield.

Illinois School Health Association Annual Conference Scheduled for April 11

The Illinois School Health Association (ISHA) will hold its annual conference on April 11 at the Crowne Plaza Glen Ellyn/Lombard, 1250 Roosevelt Road, in Glen Ellyn.

The ISHA is a membership group comprised primarily of licensed educators endorsed in health education or school nursing as well as educators in higher education and public health.

Jim Bondi of Hinsdale South High School will provide the keynote presentation, “It’s NOT ‘Just Health’: Obstacles and Opportunities for the 21st Century Health Educator.” Breakout sessions will cover topics including lessons learned in heroin prevention education, trends in mental health issues, new sexuality education requirements in Illinois and the use of technology in teaching health.

More information about the conference presentations is available at

http://www.ishaweb.com/documents/2014_conference_program.pdf.

Conference rates and registration information are available at <http://www.ishaweb.com/registration.html>. The early registration deadline is April 1.

Heartsaver Automated External Defibrillator Fund Grant Available

The General Assembly has appropriated \$100,000 for the Heartsaver Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Fund Grant.

The program provides matching funds to schools and other public agencies to pay for AEDs. The application is available on the Department of Public Health’s Electronic Grant Administration and Management System (EGrAMS) at www.idphgrants.com.

Applicants must demonstrate that they have the funds to pay 50 percent of the cost of the AED, as determined by the State Master Contract or the Department. The Heartsaver AED Fund Grant award for FY 2014 is \$450 or at 50 percent of the purchased AED price if less than \$900.

The deadline to apply is Monday, April 14. Grants will be limited to one unit per recipient and will be awarded in the order received until grant money is exhausted.

All AEDs purchased between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014, will qualify for the grant.

For more information, contact Paula Atteberry at paula.atteberry@illinois.gov or at (217) 785-2083.

Those Who Excel

Nomination Packets Available for 2014-2015 Those Who Excel/Teacher of the Year

Nomination packets for the 2014-2015 Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year program are now available.

The program includes seven nomination categories: classroom teacher, school administrator/principal, student support personnel, educational service personnel, school board member/community volunteer, team and early career educator. Districts may nominate one candidate per category, except in Chicago Public School District 299, where multiple nominations are permitted.

Nominations must be postmarked by Monday, June 9. The 2014-2015 awards will be presented at the Those Who Excel banquet on Saturday, Oct. 25, at the Marriott Bloomington-Normal Conference Center.

Please visit http://www.isbe.net/those_who_excel.htm to print the application or contact ISBE’s Public Information Division at (217) 782-4648 to have a copy mailed to you.

Early Childhood Division

Reminder: New ISBE Bilingual Rules and Early Childhood Teacher Preparation

In an effort to strengthen and support the academic achievement of English Language Learners in Illinois, new administrative rules went into effect in July 2010 that expanded bilingual services to preschool programs administered by a school district. In accordance with 23 Ill Administrative Code Part 228, effective July 1, 2014, preschool teachers who provide native language

or ESL instruction to ELL students must also hold the English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual endorsement that corresponds with the teaching assignment.

For more information, contact the ISBE Division of English Language Learning at (312) 814-3850 or the ISBE Division of Early Childhood at (217) 524-4835.

An explanation of the rules can be found in the PowerPoint “Overview: The New ISBE Bilingual Rules and Early Childhood Teacher Preparation,” located at http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/pdf/ec_bilingual_rules_webinar_pres.pdf.

For additional resources to support your preschool English Language Learners, go to http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/preschool/preschool_ell.htm.

In Brief

District Opportunities

- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) seeks participants for the third cohort of the **Enhancing School Health Services through Training, Education, Assistance, Mentorship, and Support (TEAMS) project**. Through the TEAMS project, the AAP provides customized training, resources and technical assistance to school districts that are interested in strengthening policies, practices and infrastructure related to school health services. All public school districts that provide health services (nursing services) for students, excluding charter districts, are eligible to apply. The deadline is Friday, March 14. For more information, go to <https://schoolhealthteams.aap.org/uploads/ckeditor/files/TEAMS%202014%20Request%20for%20Applications.pdf>.
- Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago (CRFC) and Mikva Challenge have released a version of their **Suffrage at 17** voter education curriculum for use in all Illinois high schools. Thanks to the “Suffrage at 17” legislation passed in Illinois last year, 17-year-old students who will be 18 by the Nov. 4, 2014, general election are now eligible to vote in the primary elections. Suffrage at 17 aligns to the Common Core State Standards and utilizes hands-on activities to help students understand the

importance of voting. Teachers can download the curriculum for free at <http://www.crfc.org/teaching-materials/suffrage-17-voter-education-curriculum-illinois-edition>.

Grant Opportunities

- Action for Healthy Kids has announced the availability of **School Grants for Healthy Kids** in the range of \$500 to \$5,000 nationwide. Nearly 1,000 grants will be awarded. The grants are designed to help schools create or expand School Breakfast Programs, pilot Universal Breakfast Programs and enhance their physical activity programs. The deadline is May 2, and a one-hour introductory webinar is scheduled for March 20 at 2 p.m. To register for the webinar and access the application, visit www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources/school-grants.

Classroom Opportunities

- The Illinois Department of Natural Resources has added new lessons based on the **Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS)** to its website at <http://dnr.state.il.us/education/standards.htm>. Visit often as lessons will be added as they are completed. Recently added lesson topics include: mammals for grades K-3, fossils for grades 3-4 and middle school and trees for grade 1. The site also has lessons correlated to the newly revised Illinois Early Learning Standards.
- A new **Project Squirrel mobile phone app** is now available to help students become involved in citizen science activities that can be incorporated into lessons to support the NGSS. The app is free and available in Apple and Android versions. Go to iTunes or the Google Play Store to download the app. Lessons to support squirrel observations will be posted at <http://dnr.state.il.us/education/standards.htm>. More information about Project Squirrel is available at www.projectsquirrel.org.
- The National WWII Museum has launched a new **Digital Collections website** at <http://ww2online.org> to tell the story of the American experience during World War II. The resource contains 150 oral history interviews and several thousand archival photographs that may be used in lesson plans.

In the News

- South Elgin High School nurse Julia Olsta recently received **The Journal of School Nursing/SAGE First Publication Award by a School Nurse** for her publication entitled “Bringing Breakfast to Our Students: A Program to Increase School Breakfast Participation.” Olsta will be presented with the award at the National Association of School Nurses’ annual meeting in San Antonio, Texas, in June. To read more, go to <http://www.u-46.org/npps/story.cfm?npage=1275>.

Professional Development

- Registration is now open for the new **ENTICE (Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education) workshop** schedule for July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2015. The workshops offer training on Illinois-specific topics and supply tools to implement topics into curriculum immediately. Continuing Professional Development Units are available at all ENTICE workshops. Register at the following link: <https://www.enticeworkshops.com>.
- The Office of Community College Research and Leadership and the Pathways Resource Center of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign will hold a conference for all K-20 leaders called Scaling Up Pathways to Results 2014 on Wednesday, March 5, in Champaign. The cost is \$80, which will be waived for educators from Race to the Top districts. For more information and to register, visit <http://occrf.illinois.edu/projects/pathways/scaling-up-2014/>.
- **The Illinois Department of Natural Resources Division of Education’s video podcasts** can help educators preview and plan lessons as well as provide teaching tools and tips for completing grant applications. Visit <http://dnr.state.il.us/education/podcasts.htm> or search for them through the iTunes Store and on YouTube (search for “IDNREducation”).

Student Opportunities

- The National WWII Museum seeks submissions for its **National 2014 High School Essay Contest** and **2014 Middle School Essay Contest**. To coincide with the 70th anniversary of D-Day, this

year’s contests ask students to think about a time in their lives when they had to make important plans for success in spite of uncertainty. Submissions are due March 28. Full contest guidelines and rules are available at <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/essay-contests/>.

- The Illinois Liquor Control Commission is holding a **Teen Video Contest** as part of its spring YOUR ACTIONS MATTER! statewide educational campaign. All youth ages 18 years and under can participate in the contest, with the winning spot(s) airing on TV stations throughout the state. The deadline to apply is Tuesday, April 8. For more information, visit www.YourActionsMatter.org. Judges are also needed to review the 30-second video submissions. To serve on the panel, contact Ted Penesis at (312) 814-4802 or ted.penesis@illinois.gov.

Resources

- April is **Child Abuse Prevention Month**. Since 1983, millions have participated in this campaign aimed at raising awareness of child abuse and neglect and to promote specific ways to join the prevention effort. For more information, download the 2014 Child Abuse Prevention Month Community Packet at http://media.wix.com/ugd/eabf46_6790ee4f36a643c49c07af6c0d024fb7.pdf.
- **IDNR’s Resources Trunks** are available statewide and represent 10 topics. The trunks supplement many lessons and provide hands-on resources to enliven teaching. Visit <http://dnr.state.il.us/education/CLASSRM/teach.htm> for links to all of the resources trunk websites and lending site contact information.

Employment Opportunities

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