



# Weekly Message

*March 8, 2010*

## Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Last week we received notification that Illinois was selected as one of 16 finalists for the federal competitive grant program, Race to the Top. Next week, a team of five of us from Illinois will go to Washington to defend our application. We will find out in April whether or not we receive the grant funding.

I believe that making it this far is an important statement on behalf of our education community and we could not have come this far without the commitments made by our districts and stakeholder organizations. Our application is a blueprint for where education should be heading over the next decade, and I think it's because of this consensus that we were chosen as a finalist. If we are selected to receive an award, we will send out notification to "Participating LEAs" about next steps as soon as possible after the announcement.

Last week I had the opportunity to defend the Board's budget before a Senate Appropriation committee, which essentially calls for level funding from FY 2010 to FY 2011. While the focus was to be on the Board's budget, members also asked questions about legislation that would require cuts of 10 percent to all FY10 state spending, including all of the ISBE lines.

I told the members of the committee that because of the late date schools couldn't layoff staff this year, so if 10 percent of the state funds going to districts were cut, they would have to draw down reserves, borrow or find other non-personnel reductions to make ends meet. While I hope that legislators do not follow through with this 10 percent cut for FY 2010, Governor Quinn will introduce his FY 2011 budget on Wednesday and the administration has already indicated that it will include a recommendation for almost a billion dollars in cuts to education. This proposed cut matches precisely the amount of federal stabilization funds that have been or will be used in FY 2010 to pay for General State Aid and other state funded education expenses. I told all of the legislators, and I thank those of you who are also speaking with them, that our schools cannot take these types of cuts without impacting classroom instruction and services to our students, or draining reserves.

I presented preliminary results from the Winter 2010 Reduction in Force survey which showed about 13,000 layoffs will occur at Illinois schools based on the Board's proposed FY11 budget. I emphasized that this 13,000 figure is based upon level funding and if schools were to be reduced by 10 percent or more, that figure would grow exponentially, possibly reaching 30,000 layoffs.

At points, the interaction at the committee hearing grew heated because of certain cuts that the Board had proposed; but this is an understandable, and healthy, part of the process. Legislators need to know that the State's precarious financial situation is having real impacts in schools, on students, parents and teachers. I urge you to continue to communicate your district needs to legislators, parents and community members.

I will testify this week before the House Education Appropriation Committee.

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I also had the opportunity to testify about our state's testing system. As many of you know, we have made some recommendations to discontinue two of the tests not required by federal law. This was an opportunity to provide information to legislators about what is required, what is not and why we administer the tests. It also provided legislators an opportunity to hear about our work on the Common Core of State Standards and the direction we want to go in the future with developing new formative, interim and summative assessments.

Have a great week!

Chris

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## Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **2008-09 Study of School Level Expenditure Report deadline** – March 15
- **Preserve America History Teacher of the Year Award nomination deadline** – March 15
- **Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program Grant applications deadline** – March 15
- **Part 180 (Health/Life Safety Code for Public Schools)** – Public comment period ends March 15
- **Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) RFP deadline** – April 14
- **Illinois School Wellness ... From A to Z Conference** – May 4
- **Illinois Young Authors' Conference in Bloomington-Normal** – May 15
- **2009-10 Eye Examination Data Collection deadline** – June 30
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2010** – Aug. 13
- **Superintendents' Conference** – Oct. 26-27

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## American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

### ARRA Reporting – SFSF Education Payments for General State Aid

In an e-mail dated Feb. 19, information was provided regarding the distribution of the next three General State Aid (GSA) payments on Feb. 19, March 10 and March 19 using American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (SFSF) Education funds. Federal rules require that the time between receipt of federal funds and their expenditure must be minimized to avoid excess cash on hand. To comply with this rule local education agencies (LEAs) must fully expend these three payments on or before March 31.

To meet this requirement, local education agencies (LEAs) need to keep in mind the following:

1. The three SFSF Education GSA payments can be used for legitimate local expenditures between January 1, 2010 and March 31, 2010.
2. SFSF payments can be utilized for expenses beyond salaries and benefits. LEAs should also look to other general operating costs in the

quarter to fully expend these funds (e.g. utilities costs, supplies and materials, equipment etc.). Please refer to "Expenditures – ARRA General State Aid" on Page 6 in the ARRA Reporting Instructions at

[http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra\\_reporting\\_inst.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra_reporting_inst.pdf) for more information.

The ability to charge the SFSF Education GSA payments for expenditures in the entire quarter should be adequate for all LEAs to fully expend these funds by March 31, 2010. If there are further questions regarding this issue, please contact Jim Mathes at [jmathes@isbe.net](mailto:jmathes@isbe.net) or Marj Beck at [mbeck@isbe.net](mailto:mbeck@isbe.net) or 217-782-5256.

LEAs are required to report funded jobs that are in alignment with the new guidance as provided in the ARRA Reporting Instructions. The deadline for reporting ARRA jobs and vendor data to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for the reporting quarter ending March 31 is Monday April 5, 2010. ISBE has created a new ARRA data collection system in IWAS for LEAs to report full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs information as well as vendor payment data. Previously, LEAs submitted ARRA jobs and vendor information as an addendum to the financial expenditures reported via the Electronic Expenditure Reporting System in IWAS. The new ARRA data collection tool is now a stand alone

system. Administrators are preapproved to access the new system. All other LEA users will need to request access to the new system through the normal process used when signing up for additional systems within IWAS. Users begin this process by selecting "Want to Signup for Other Systems?" on the lower right of the screen.

ISBE will conduct an ARRA reporting Webinar on Friday, March 12, from 2 to 3 p.m. Register at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/273347296>.

### **New ARRA Jobs and Vendor Data Collection System**

The Illinois State Board of Education has created a new American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) data collection system for local education agencies (LEAs) to report full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs information as well as vendor payment data. Previously, LEAs submitted ARRA jobs and vendor information as an addendum to the financial expenditures reported via the Electronic Expenditure Reporting System in IWAS. The new ARRA data collection tool is now a stand alone system in the IWAS System Listing. Administrators are preapproved to access the new system. All other LEA users will need to request access to the new system through the normal process used when signing up for additional systems within IWAS. After a user logs into their IWAS account select System Listing and begin the process by selecting "Want to Signup for Other Systems?" on the lower right of the screen.

LEAs that have not been able to report ARRA jobs and vendor data for the period ending Sept. 30 due to delays in application approval are now able to do so. In addition, jobs data reported for the period ending Dec. 31 should be reviewed and amended accordingly due to new guidance issued by the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on Dec. 18, which can be accessed at [http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda\\_2010/m10-08.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/assets/memoranda_2010/m10-08.pdf).

The new guidance reflects two significant changes:

1. Subjective assessment has been eliminated in favor of reporting FTE jobs as those funded in the reporting quarter with ARRA funds. Jobs funded partially with ARRA funds will only be counted based on the proportion funded by ARRA. Previous guidance required LEAs to make a subjective judgment on whether a given job would have existed were it not for ARRA funds.

2. LEAs must report FTE jobs by dividing the ARRA funded hours worked by the employee in the reporting quarter (i.e., the most recent quarter) by the hours in a full-time schedule in that reporting quarter. Previous guidance required LEAs to sum all hours worked from the current and all prior quarters and divide that total against a cumulative sum of all full-time hours from the current and prior reporting quarters. The December 2009 Federal OMB guidance has been incorporated into ISBE's new ARRA reporting procedures, which can be accessed at [http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra\\_reporting\\_inst.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra_reporting_inst.pdf). Please read the revised procedures before entering data into the new ARRA reporting system. If the LEA has a pending application (e.g. Title I or IDEA Part B) that has a start date prior to Sept. 30, 2009, or if jobs information for the period ending Dec. 31, 2009, needs amended to be in alignment with the new OMB guidance please enter that information into the new ARRA data collection system.

ISBE will conduct a Webinar to review these important changes on March 12 from 2 to 3 p.m. Participants may register for the ARRA Reporting Webinar at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/273347296>. If you have further questions, please contact the division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

### **ARRA Jobs and Vendor Data Due April 5, 2010**

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and vendor data for the quarter ending March 31, 2010, is due at the Illinois State Board of Education on or before April 5, 2010. ARRA jobs and vendor data must be submitted by all local education agencies (LEAs) that have applied for and/or received ARRA funds. Please note that the jobs calculation has changed per new Federal guidance. Refer to the new ARRA Reporting Instructions at [http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra\\_reporting\\_inst.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra_reporting_inst.pdf) for more information. ARRA data reporting includes two primary elements: the number of jobs funded in the reporting quarter with ARRA funds and payments made to a vendor that were \$25,000 or more. ARRA data must be reported regardless of whether any jobs were funded or a payment was made to a vendor of \$25,000 or more.

March 31 ARRA data must be reported for the following ARRA programs if your LEA has been awarded or received funds:

- State Fiscal Stabilization Fund – Education (General State Aid) – Revenue Code 4850
- Title I Low Income – Revenue Code 4851
- Title I Low Income Neglected – Revenue Code 4852
- Title I Low Income Delinquent – Revenue Code 4853
- IDEA Part B Preschool – Revenue Code – 4856
- IDEA Part B Flow Through – Revenue Code 4857
- Title II D Enhancing Education Through Technology – Revenue Code 4861
- McKinney Vento Homeless Education – Revenue Code 4862

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## Special Education Services

### State Board Seeks Public Comment on FY 2010 Draft IDEA Part B Application

The Illinois State Board of Education's Special Education Services division has completed the grant application under Part B of IDEA as amended in 2004. Upon receipt and approval of the required assurances, certifications and information in the application, the state is eligible to receive Part B funds.

The General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) requires that states must publish their Part B Application for at least 60 days and accept public comment for at least 30 days. The plan can be reviewed at the ISBE Web site through May 3 at [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/IDEA\\_PartB\\_app\\_FFY10.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/IDEA_PartB_app_FFY10.pdf).

The plan includes a checklist of assurances that Illinois has policies and procedures in effect to comply with the requirements of the December 2004 amendments to IDEA. Where Illinois is not in compliance with the IDEA amendments of 2004, a date is given by which Illinois assures that policies and procedures will be in effect. The plan for expenditure of state-level IDEA funds by category is also a component of the state plan.

Written comments will only be accepted April 1 to May 3. To submit a written comment, go to [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/IDEA\\_PartB\\_app10\\_comment.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/IDEA_PartB_app10_comment.pdf).

In addition, public comments may be e-mailed to PartBapplication@isbe.net or mailed to: David Andel, Division Administrator, Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Special Education Services, 100

North First Street – N-253, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001.

Interested persons can review a copy of the plan and comment form at the Illinois State Board of Education office at 100 N. First St., Springfield, IL in the Information Center located on the first floor in 1 South.

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## Nutrition

### FDA Working on Recalls for Flavor Enhancer Used in Variety of Foods

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is working on several recalls involving hydrolyzed vegetable protein (HVP). HVP is a common ingredient used most frequently as a flavor enhancer in many processed foods, including soups, sauces, chilies, stews, hot dogs, gravies, seasoned snack foods, dips and dressings.

At this time, there are no known illnesses associated with this contamination and there have been no recalls connected with USDA-purchased commodities.

The FDA recommends consumers:

- Check <http://www.foodsafety.gov> or <http://www.recalls.gov> for a list of recalled products.
- Remember to follow cooking instructions for all foods.
- Report symptoms of Salmonella or other food-related illness to your local health care professional.

If you have questions, call the FDA at 888-463-6332.

### Department of Defense Fresh Fruit and Vegetables Unused Funds

For the current school year, the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) allowed participation in the program to all schools that requested to participate subject to a \$500 allocation floor. The Illinois State Board of Education allocated the money we could spend with the DoD amongst all schools that selected yes under Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Participation on the Annual Order Forms menu option on the Illinois Commodity System (ICS). Recent reports from the DoD indicate many schools that have money allocated to them have yet to place any orders for fresh fruits or vegetables. Schools can see how much money has been allocated to them by selecting



Fresh Fruits and Vegetables Participation on the Annual Order Forms menu option on the ICS.

Those schools that have not spent any of the money allocated to them are advised to contact the Department of Defense at 215-737-5573 to begin placing orders or risk having the money used by other schools participating in the program. Unused funds will be available for use by other schools participating in the program beginning March 15. Funds for this school year will be available until the yearly allocation of funding for this program is expended.

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## Rules and Waivers

### Notice of Completed Rulemaking

Please be advised that three sets of rules recently adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education are in effect. These rules have been posted on the agency's Web site at <http://www.isbe.net/rules>. Please choose "Rules Currently in Effect" and scroll to the applicable Part number.

#### Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision)

Among other updates, changes the correction window for the Prairie State Achievement Examination, conforms school fee waiver provisions to P.A. 96-360, adds new curricular requirements resulting from recently enacted legislation, and updates a cross-reference to bilingual education requirements.

*Affected Sections: 1.30, 1.60, 1.245, 1.420, 1.445, 1.705*  
*Effective Date: Jan. 18, 2010*

#### Part 151 (School Construction)

Adds provisions pertaining to application for energy efficiency grants; provides for an electronic application process for school maintenance grants.

*Affected Sections: 151.20, 151.50, 151.100, 151.110, 151.120, 151.200, 151.210, 151.220, 151.230, 151.235, 151.240*

*Effective Date: Jan. 18, 2010*

#### Part 252 (Driver Education)

Changes references to Section 27-23 of the School Code [105 ILCS 5/27-23], which was repealed, to the School Code sections into which applicable requirements were incorporated.

*Affected Sections: 252.10, 252.25*

*Effective Date: Jan. 18, 2010*

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## Funding and Disbursement Services

### Public School Calendar Coding for Holidays Affected by PA 96-0640

As proposed public school calendars are being prepared and submitted for the upcoming 2010-11 school year please be reminded of important changes per the enactment of Public Act 96-0640 on Aug. 24, 2009.

The public act added language to Section 24-2 of the School Code and allows a school board or other entity eligible to apply for waivers and modifications under Section 2-3.25g to hold school or schedule teachers' institute, parent/teacher conference or staff development on five legal school holidays, namely Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday (Third Monday in January); Abraham Lincoln's Birthday (Feb. 12); Casimir Pulaski's Birthday (first Monday in March); Columbus Day (second Monday in October) and Veterans' Day (Nov. 11) provided that:

1. the person or persons honored by the holiday are recognized through instructional activities conducted on that day or if the day is not used for student attendance on the first day preceding or following that day; and
2. the entity that chooses to exercise this authority first holds a public hearing about the proposal. The entity shall provide notice preceding the public hearing to both educators and parents. The notice shall set forth the time, date and place of the hearing, describe the proposal, and indicate that the entity will take testimony from educators and parents about the proposal.

NOTE: Use of one or any of these five legal school holidays for anything other than a holiday is prohibited without completing the above process.

It is the responsibility of the public school district or other eligible entity to ensure that the required process is complete prior to manually changing the Holiday calendar code (HOL) to the modified calendar code (X, TI, FPT, XHPT, FI, XHI, XHS) on the Public School Calendar via IWAS. The district is required to keep local documentation of the public hearing, including testimony taken, for compliance and audit purposes.

If you have questions regarding this information please contact your Regional Office of Education or Marj Beck at 217-782-5256 or [mbeck@isbe.net](mailto:mbeck@isbe.net).

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## Innovation and Improvement

### Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program FY 2011 RFP

The State Board has release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for TAOEP, which offers supplemental services and/or optional education to dropouts, truant, chronic truant or potential dropouts.

Eligible applicants are public school districts, Regional Offices of Education, community college districts, public university laboratory schools, charter schools and area vocational centers. Bidders' Conferences were scheduled for March 4 and March 12. The entire Request for Proposal with the details for the bidders' conferences (Page 2) is available at <http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/taoep.htm>.

The deadline is April 14. For more information, contact Sally Veach, Innovation and Improvement Division at [sveach@isbe.net](mailto:sveach@isbe.net) or 217-524-4832.

### Request Addresses Tier II Schools, 'Persistently Lowest-Achieving Schools'

ISBE has applied to the U.S. Department of Education (ED) for a waiver of the definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools" and the identification of Tier II schools. Specifically, ISBE is requesting a waiver of paragraph (a)(2) of the definition of "persistently lowest-achieving schools" in order to capture, among its persistently lowest-achieving Tier II secondary schools, Title I secondary schools that are lower achieving than one or more Tier II schools but do not qualify as Tier II schools because they are receiving Title I, Part A funds and do not qualify as Tier I schools because they are not among the lowest-achieving 5 percent of such schools (or lowest achieving five such schools) in the state. Any Title I secondary school that is identified, through this waiver, as being among the persistently lowest-achieving schools in the state would be identified by Illinois as one of the state's Tier II schools.

ISBE encourages interested parties to review ED's School Improvement Guidance for additional details available at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/sif/index.html>. A copy of the letter submitted to ED and updates will be posted at [http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip\\_1003.htm](http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/sip_1003.htm) ISBE encourages all interested parties to comment on this request via e-mail to [sip1003g@isbe.net](mailto:sip1003g@isbe.net) by Monday, March 15.

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## Curriculum and Instruction

### Updated Adolescent Sexual Health Toolkit Released

The Illinois State Board of Education is pleased to announce that our HIV prevention contractor, the Illinois Caucus for Adolescent Health, has just released the fourth edition of the Adolescent Sexual Health Toolkit. This updated toolkit is filled with current information, cutting-edge approaches, and effective policies and practices that can support your work with adolescents.

To view this update of more than 40 new resources from highly reputable resources, visit the ICAH Web site at <http://www.icaah.wagn.org>. If you have not yet signed up for a membership to access there site, the process is quick and easy. Simply click on this link, <http://icaah.wagn.org/account/signup> and fill out the Web form. Note that they will only use your personal information to provide you with updates to the toolkit and upcoming events. For those of you who already have a full copy of a previous edition, you will find instructions on how to update your existing toolkit on the site as well.

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## Educator Certification

### NASDTEC Annual Conference to be Held in June in Indianapolis

This year's National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education & Certification conference will be held June 13-16 in Indianapolis.

Featured speakers at the 82nd annual NASDTEC conference include Tom Carroll of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, Julie Ewart from the U.S. Department of Education, Dennis van Roekel of the National Education Association and many more.

Visit <http://nasdtec.com> for the conference agenda and hotel and registration information. Call 508-380-1202 or e-mail [rje@nasdtec.com](mailto:rje@nasdtec.com) for additional questions.

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## Professional Development

### Program Sends Educators to the Galapagos Islands

Full-time classroom teacher or teacher-librarians for grades 6-12 are eligible to apply for the 2010 Toyota International Teacher Program to the Galapagos Islands.

The program, which is funded by Toyota Motor Sales USA, is administered by the Institute of International Education and will be held Nov. 20 through Dec. 4. Applicants must have at least three years of full-time teaching experience by the program start date.

On online application and frequently asked questions are available at <http://toyota4education.com>. For more information, e-mail [toyotateach@iie.org](mailto:toyotateach@iie.org) or call 877-832-2457. The deadline to apply is May 26.

### **Nominations Sought for Annual Rolland J. Van Hattum Award**

Do you know an individual who demonstrates exemplary commitment and contributions to the delivery of audiology and/or speech-language pathology services within a school setting? The 2010 nomination period for the American Speech-Language-Hearing Foundation's Roland J. Van Hattum Award for Schools-Related Professionals is open, and you are invited to nominate a professional who meets the criteria for selection.

In addition to the national recognition, the winner will receive \$1,000, and the school system represented by the recipient will receive \$500.

The deadline for nominations is April 15. To obtain nomination applications and to learn more about other ASHFoundation awards, visit <http://www.ashfoundation.org/grants>.

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## **Student Opportunities**

### **Illinois Youth With Disabilities Leadership Summit Coming Up**

The Statewide Independent Living Council is gearing up for the Illinois Youth With Disabilities Leadership Summit, which is set for July 25-28 at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

This summit aims to empower young leaders by learning from each other and from successful adults with disabilities who are recognized leaders and role models. Youth who wish to apply should have a disability, be between the ages of 17-24, live in Illinois and have a strong desire to learn and grow as a leader. The summit is free including travel to and from the event, lodging, meals and any personal care attendant services/interpreters that may be needed.

For further information, please review the Web site at <http://www.silcofillinois.org/summit.html> or call the

Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois at 217-744-7777.

### **National Institutes of Health Scholars Program at Elgin Community College**

High school seniors interested in science, medicine and cutting edge fields in biomedical research are invited to apply for the National Institutes of Health Scholars Program at Elgin Community College.

The program is a partnership with Roosevelt University and is federally funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Ten students will be selected for the two-year program that consists of two paid summer research experiences at Roosevelt University's Schaumburg campus along with regular meetings and activities during the fall and spring semesters at ECC.

To be eligible, students must plan to be enrolled full time at ECC in the fall 2010 semester. The application deadline is April 2. For more information, visit <http://www.elgin.edu/nih scholars> or e-mail Daysi Diaz-Strong at [dstrong@elfin.edu](mailto:dstrong@elfin.edu).

### **Deadline for Radon Video Contest Scheduled for Friday**

There's still time to enter the 2010 Illinois High School Radon Video Contest. The deadline is Friday, March 12. The contest encourages high school students to create a 60-second YouTube video that addresses the health hazards of radon and urges people to test their homes for the radioactive gas.

The contest is sponsored by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) and the American Lung Association in Illinois (ALA-IL) in an effort to increase public awareness about radon, which is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the U.S.

The video can be created by an individual student, group of students or classroom. The winning entrants' school will receive a \$2,000 prize to be used for curricular activities, and the winning student or students will receive a \$1,000 prize. The winning video will also be featured on the IEMA and ALA-IL Web sites.

Video entries will be judged by a combination of a panel from sponsoring organizations and public online polling. For full details about the contest, including entry and release forms, visit the ALA-IL Web site at <http://www.lungil.org>.

### **Entries Sought for Annual World Schoolchildren’s Art Exhibition**

The 41st World Schoolchildren’s Art Exhibition is scheduled for Aug. 26 to Sept. 19, with the deadline for entries set for April 20. The exhibition is organized by the Association for Education Through Art and the Association of Formative Art Education of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

In previous years, more than 70 countries and territories have participated in the annual event. Students ages 6 to 15 are eligible. For more information, call (312) 616-0805 or e-mail [info@edutw.org](mailto:info@edutw.org). The rules can be downloaded at <http://ed.arte.gov.tw>.

### **CollegeWeekLive’s Online College Fair Scheduled for Next Month**

CollegeWeekLive’s next online college fair is set for March 24 and 25. The Web site, <http://www.collegeweeklive.com>, offers students a chance to explore hundreds of colleges and universities.

The site features live video presentations on such topics as scholarship and financial aid. In addition, admission experts and student representatives also will be available to answer questions. Visit the Web site to register.

CollegeWeekLive’s partners include the U.S. Department of Education, ACT, the United Negro College Fund and Hispanic Colleges and Universities.

### **National Financial Capability Challenge Ready to Kick Off**

The U.S. Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Department of Education are teaming up for the National Financial Capability Challenge, which aims to teach high school students personal finance.

Educators are asked to register and get their students prepared for an online exam. The registration deadline is March 14, and the test is to be completed by April 9. Visit <http://challenge.treas.gov> to sign up. The site includes a free educator toolkit and printable awards for high-scoring students.

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## **Serve Illinois Commission**

### **Application Process Under Way for Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards**

Take note, students and educators with strong community service and volunteerism resumes. The Serve Illinois Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service is presenting the new Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards.

The award program will recognize individual volunteers of all ages from across the state. There are three categories: youth (18 and under), adult (ages 19-54) and retiree/senior (55 and above). One person from each age category will be recognized from five regions in the state.

Nominations are due by March 19, and winners will be announced by April 2. The governor and Serve Illinois Commission will hold a luncheon at the Executive Mansion in Springfield on April 12 to recognize award recipients. For more information and an application, visit <http://www2.illinois.gov/serve/Pages/Volunteer-Awards.aspx>.

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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/2010/newsclips/100305.htm>.