



March 9, 2009

Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

This week, I am at the Legislative Conference of the Council of Chief State School Officers and, as you can imagine, the stimulus is on the minds of everyone. I know that you have a lot of questions, as do our colleagues across the union.

This weekend, we received additional guidance on the stimulus and we have posted that to the stimulus page on our Web site, http://www.isbe.net/arra/default.htm . There are actually four documents that we're posting on the site, including an overview from the US Department of ED (USED) on the overall summary of what the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 means for education (http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/implementation.html) and several fact sheets on recovery funds for Title I; (http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/factsheet/title-i.html), Individual with Disabilities Education Act; (http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/factsheet/idea.html), and the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/factsheet/stabilization-fund.html).

These documents begin to provide us with some guidance for using the funds as well as a timeline for when we may start seeing some of this money flow from the federal government. The USED is now telling us that we could possibly see some of the IDEA and Title I funds start flowing from the federal government at the end of March. In addition, states could begin applying for the State Fiscal Stabilization funds at the end of March. There is also additional guidance on some competitive grant programs that will be available at a later date.

In summary, what the USED guidance is telling us is that they want to see the funds spent quickly to save jobs and to advance education reforms. Additionally, they continue to stress the need for transparency of how these funds are used and the need to look at using these funds in a way that will allow for sustainable improvements once the funding disappears.

Last week, we heard from the Comptroller about how the backlog of state bills continues to grow as revenues continue to fall short of expectations. While the Comptroller has made General State Aid (GSA) payments a priority, other education payments continue to lag behind. In February, just to make the GSA payment due on the 20th, the Comptroller suspended almost every other payment, including payments to pharmacies, Medicaid providers and other education payments.

Currently, the backlog of bills in the Comptroller's office stands at nearly \$3 billion, of which \$672.5 million are bills that were vouchered by the Illinois State Board of Education.

I know many schools want to know when they can expect to receive their second Mandated Categorical payments. I can't tell you when that will occur, but I can tell you that other than GSA, the Comptroller is now paying bills dated November 25. The backlog is 61 business days or nearly 3 months. The second quarter Mandated Categoricals were vouchered in late December.

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I know this is frustrating for you. It's frustrating for agency staff and vendors. We will continue to voucher bills on time and the Comptroller has assured us that GSA will remain a priority payment. Even though the strongest revenue months are yet to come, payment delays are expected to persist.

Thanks for your patience during these challenging economic times.

Chris

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## Upcoming Dates & Deadlines

- 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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## Special Education

### 2007-2008 District Special Education Profiles now available for District Administrative Review

In a continuing effort to disseminate data to local education agencies and to the public the State Board will again post District Special Education Profiles on its website. The Profiles allow the reader to access all special education performance information in one location. The reader has the ability to view a district's progress toward improving results on critical performance indicators in the areas of student performance, educational environment and school completion.

For the next two weeks school district superintendents may preview their Profile using their ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) District Admin user login name at <https://sec1.isbe.net/iwas/>.

The District Special Education Profiles system can be found under the category of Reporting on the IWAS "System Listing" page. The 2007-2008 Profiles will be open to the public after the initial district superintendent

review period and will be found via the ISBE Special Education Profiles site after **March 18** at (<http://webprod1.isbe.net/LEAProfile/Searchcriteria1.aspx>).

Questions regarding the District Special Education Profiles may be directed to **Scott Beever** or **Gwen Williams** at 217-782-5589.

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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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## 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 [saneely@isbe.net](mailto:saneely@isbe.net).

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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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## **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/090306.htm>

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