



Weekly Message

March 9, 2015

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Today we kick off the official start of the Performance-Based Assessment testing window for the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Schools throughout the PARCC states have now been testing for several weeks and here in Illinois some schools have also already been administering the PARCC assessment.

The PARCC assessment is a big change for Illinois and for education. It takes us away from rote memorization and moves us toward the application of knowledge, which I think we can all agree is a good thing. We know there will be issues any time you have a major system change and the PARCC assessment is no exception. We have seen issues as other states have begun the administration and those have been addressed. There will be more issues and I thank you in advance for your patience in addressing them.

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Since the start of this initial administration nearly 1.5 million tests have been completed, with more than 147,000 completed here in Illinois. We will be posting on our Twitter account an update each morning on the number of tests started and completed through the duration of this initial testing window. You can follow us on Twitter at @isbenews.

One of the concerns that has been voiced repeatedly is the relevance of PARCC to higher education. PARCC has been designed to be a placement test, not an entrance exam. The concept is that Performance Level Descriptors (www.parcconline.org/sites/parcc/files/PARCCCRDPolicyandPLDs_FINAL_0.pdf) provide guidance to colleges on student preparedness for entry-level courses. Recently, the Illinois Council of Community College Presidents (ICCCP) approved a policy to accept a performance level of 4 or 5 in math or English language arts on PARCC to place students directly into credit-bearing classes without requiring remediation. Additionally, institutions can develop policies for math that allow a 3 on PARCC in combination with having passed a higher-level high school math class to qualify a student to enroll directly into credit-bearing math classes. This decision on the part of the ICCCP represents a significant first step toward the use of PARCC as a placement exam within higher education.

Finally, last week I shared a PARCC video with you from the staff at Skokie School District 68. The response to that video was very positive and many of you sent in videos of your own. We have since posted a number of those videos on our Facebook and Twitter accounts. If we receive additional videos from you and your staff, we will share them on social media.

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>.

- **Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education program Request for Proposal bidders’ conference webinar** – March 12 (<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1754266768509857793>)
- **2015 Illinois Arts Education Week** – March 16-22
- **Third annual Illinois 5Essentials survey administration extension date** – March 20 (<http://illinois.5-essentials.org>)
- **Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) testing window** – March 23-May 1
- **Part 650 (Charter Schools) and Part 1105 (Procurement by the State Board of Education)** – Public comment period ends March 23
- **Deadline to complete the new teacher evaluation system survey** – March 24 (www.surveymonkey.com/s/PEACImpSur)
- **“Teacher Leadership: Learning Forward with Maddie Fennell” event** – April 2 (www.eventbrite.com/e/teacher-leadership-learning-forward-with-maddie-fennell-tickets-15739229459)
- **PARCC Diagnostic Field Test** – April 6-17
- **Part 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting, and Auditing), Part 120 (Pupil Transportation Reimbursement), Part 151 (School Construction Program), Part 365 (Children’s Low-cost Laptop Program), Part 525 (Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Services), New Part 525 (Intermediate Services) and Part 560 (Parental Participation Pilot Program)** – Public comment period ends April 13
- **Eighth annual Illinois School Wellness Conference** – April 23
- **Deadline to submit the Truants’ Alternative and Optional Educational Program Request for Proposal and continuation application** – April 28
- **Spring 2015 PARCC ELA/L Field Test Administration** – May 4-June 5
- **TECH 2015 student showcase** – May 7
- **ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day** – May 25
- **Deadline to submit nomination forms for the 2016 Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year program** – June 8 (www.isbe.net/those-who-excel/pdfs/those-who-excel-app.pdf)
- **Deadline to submit data in the Student Health Data –Vision system** - June 30
- **ISBE offices closed for Independence Day** – July 3
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in fall 2015** – Friday, Aug. 14, 2015 (See www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm for public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)

Illinois Learning Standards

Alignment Workshop Spring Sessions Scheduled in Lisle and Moline

The Illinois State Board of Education is once again sponsoring a one-day alignment workshop,

“Detecting Evidence in Quality Lessons/Units: 4 Dimensions of Alignment in a ONE-Page Tool.”

The workshop will be held in Lisle on April 21 and in Moline on April 22. Each event will introduce teachers to a one-page tool, Educators Evaluating Quality Instructional Products (EQuIP) Rubric, that

helps identify all of the necessary criteria of quality lessons/units.

Teachers will learn about resources that specifically address the four dimensions: alignment to the depth of the standards, key shifts, instructional supports and assessment.

Details and registration information are available online at www.isbe.net/common_core/pdf/workshop-spring-2015.pdf.

Illinois 5Essentials Survey

ISBE Extends 5Essentials Survey Administration Window to March 20

ISBE has extended the administration window for its annual 5Essentials Survey to March 20.

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

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

Survey results will be released in May to principals and superintendents. A summary of the 5Essential results will be reported publicly on the State School Report Card website at <http://illinoisreportcard.com>. Detailed survey reports will also be publicly released. Survey results for 2014 and beyond will be normed using the 2013 statewide results so that all schools can demonstrate progress over time on the survey measures.

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

Special Education Services

Truants' Alternative and Optional Education Program FY 2016 RFP Webinar

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

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

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

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

System of Support and District Intervention

Grant Readers Sought for School Improvement Grant Competition

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

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

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

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

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

Data Analysis and Accountability

Employment Information Systems Virtual Course Now Live

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

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

This course covers:

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

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

To ask questions or make suggestions for the course, call the EIS Help Desk at (217) 782-3950 or email datahelp@isbe.net.

For technical assistance, please contact the ISBE Help Desk at (217) 558-3600.

Performance Evaluation Advisory Council

Survey Available to Collect Feedback on New Teacher Evaluation Systems

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

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

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

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

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

In Brief

School Safety

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

Student Opportunities

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

Professional Development

- The **Illinois Association of Aggregate Producers' (IAAP) Illinois Teachers Workshop** is a three-day event designed to inform Illinois educators about the importance of rocks, minerals, and mining in everyday life. The IAAP has

partnered with the Illinois Science Teachers' Association to put on the event, which is scheduled for July 13-15 at Brehm Preparatory School in Carbondale. A registration form detailing workshop fees is available for download at www.iaap-aggregates.org/workshop.htm.

- Registration is open for **Wired Wednesday Webinars**, a unique collaboration that focuses on the Common Core State Standards in speaking and listening. The Illinois Reading Council has partnered with the Wisconsin State Reading Association to provide the webinars. All webinars begin at 7 p.m. For more information or to register, please visit www.illinoisreadingcouncil.org or call (888) 454-1341. Upcoming presenters include:
 - Doug Fisher: Collaborative Conversations and the Speaking and Listening Standards on March 17.
 - Matt Copeland: Facilitating Student Discussion with Socratic Circles on April 15.

Employment Opportunities

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