



# Weekly Message

**Dec. 16, 2015**

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## Message From State Superintendent Tony Smith, Ph.D.

Hello,

Earlier this month, I joined a group of superintendents along with representatives of the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research (UChicago CCSR) to discuss their experience with the Illinois 5Essentials Survey, how it can be improved, and ways to solicit the most honest feedback from families, students, and teachers. The meeting provided an important opportunity and engaging dialogue with superintendents focused on understanding and communicating the learning conditions and environment of individual schools.

I want to share CCSR's comprehensive analysis of state 5Essentials results. The report, ["A First Look at the 5Essentials in Illinois Schools,"](#) found systematic differences among schools in the degree to which students and teachers report strength in the [five essential supports](#). The report analyzed data from the 2013 survey administered by the Illinois State Board of Education and the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute to all teachers and students in grades 6-12.

A research summary of the report is available [here](#). I encourage you all to take a look and consider how the findings correspond to your own local results.

Last Friday marked the public release of the final school- and district-level results from the 2015 administration of the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) test. As many of you are aware, the embargo was unexpectedly broken before the release date in response to some reporters who believed they had a right to release certain data that the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) felt was protected. As a result, some school districts were not the first to share their own local results, and for that I apologize. Many people were frustrated and disappointed, and I take full responsibility for the breakdown in communication. We are committed to supporting every district to use the PARCC data as a new baseline. We want to help you share the positive stories coming out of classrooms and avoid the talk of failing schools that plagued our previous accountability systems.

The PARCC test asks a new question: How ready are our children for what's coming? There are many data points, from employment rates to college remediation rates that suggest our students may

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***Editor's note:** This is 2015's last issue of the ISBE Weekly Message. The newsletter will return the week of Jan. 4.*

do well along their preK-12 journey but they're not ready for what's next once they pursue higher education and/or their career field. The PARCC test results provide a new baseline to measure this readiness.

Many of the initial stories about the PARCC results were framed around who did not take the test and how few students met or exceeded standards. I believe it is critically important to recognize how many of our students met these high expectations, what this significant shift in readiness means, and how the PARCC test is a different kind of assessment than previous state tests. Just under 1 million Illinois students in grades 3-8 and high school took the PARCC test, while only 43,000 students who were eligible to take the test did not due to refusal or absence. Our state met the high threshold of a 95 percent testing rate across the state, which is a remarkable accomplishment.

The assessment of readiness has to be a part of how we address the need to prepare students to continue higher learning, enter the working world, and become active, engaged members of their local communities. The PARCC test is an important tool in measuring readiness and ties in with the reforms included in the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which President Obama signed into law last week. The ESSA reauthorizes the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and replaces the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. ISBE believes the law will enhance local control and hold educators accountable while also providing more flexibility to meet the unique needs of each student in our state. Administering the PARCC exam is consistent with the ESSA's annual testing requirements and will help us know where students are on the path to readiness and target resources where more help is needed.

We must do a better job of sharing the incredible examples of achievement and innovation from districts that are leading the way in the face of fewer financial resources, greater student needs, and rising expectations. Our administrators and teachers give their lives every single day in classrooms, in schools, and in districts to meet the needs of children and strengthen communities. It is true that the first set of PARCC results show that our children are not where we need them to be to be successful after high school graduation. We know that story must be told, especially when examining the great gaps that exist among more vulnerable student groups, including English language learners, African American students, and low-income children. We are wasting an enormous amount of human capacity and talent if we do not determine how to better serve and support these students. But we also need to acknowledge the extraordinary work that educators are doing every day and the high-quality leadership that exists in our districts. We must discuss problems as they actually are and become solution-oriented. The PARCC score data gives us a chance to do just that.

As you begin these conversations in your own school communities, I encourage you to visit our updated PARCC score toolkit at [www.isbe.net/hot-topics.htm?col2=open#toolkit](http://www.isbe.net/hot-topics.htm?col2=open#toolkit). New materials include a guide to understanding how to access and understand PARCC scores on the Illinois Report Card and "score wrappers" for each grade level and test that we encourage you to share with parents as they receive their child's individual score reports. These wrappers are an additional resource that provides a more in-depth explanation of students' scores and the various performance levels.

Thank you and have a wonderful week,  
Tony

## 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>.

- **Deadline to submit session ideas for the ninth annual Illinois School Wellness Conference** – Dec. 16.
- **Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision), Part 425 (Voluntary Registration and Recognition of Nonpublic Schools), and Part 525 (Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Services)** – Public comment period ends Dec. 21
- **Deadline to submit 2016 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Self-Monitoring Evaluation packet** – Dec. 22
- **ISBE offices closed for Christmas Day** – Dec. 25
- **ISBE offices closed for New Year's Day** – Jan. 1
- **2016 Illinois 5Essential Survey administration window** – Jan. 11-March 11
- **Postmark deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in spring 2016** – Jan. 15, 2016 (See [www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm) for public notice requirements for all waiver requests.)
- **Deadline to submit written opt-out petition for the SFSP mandate (Public Act 096-0734) to regional superintendents of schools** – Jan. 15
- **ISBE offices closed for Martin Luther King Jr. Day** – Jan. 18
- **Deadline to apply for "Schools of Opportunity" Recognition Program** – Jan. 20 (<http://opportunitygap.org>)
- **Deadline to submit IDEA excess cost worksheets to the Special Education Services Division** – Jan. 29
- **Deadline to submit proposals for the Educator Equity Program Development Grant** – Feb. 1 ([http://isbe.net/funding\\_opps/htmls/rfp.htm](http://isbe.net/funding_opps/htmls/rfp.htm))
- **ISBE offices closed for Lincoln's Birthday** – Feb. 12
- **ISBE offices closed for Presidents' Day** – Feb. 15
- **2016 Illinois Arts Education Week** – March 14-20
- **Ninth annual Illinois School Wellness Conference** – April 28
- **Deadline to submit data in the Student Health - Vision system** – June 30

## Educator Effectiveness

### RFP Available for New Educator Equity Program Development Grant

ISBE is releasing a request for proposal for a new Educator Equity Program Development Grant. The information is located on the Funding Opportunities page of the ISBE website at [http://isbe.net/funding\\_opps/htmls/rfp.htm](http://isbe.net/funding_opps/htmls/rfp.htm). The purpose of the competitive grants is to select four eligible applicants to develop and implement programs; collect, analyze, and report data; and share best or promising practices related to educator recruitment and retention, teacher leaders, and family and community engagement that will help ensure that every student has access to highly effective educators.

Eligible applicants include school districts, public university laboratory schools approved by ISBE, charter schools, and area vocational centers that have a district enrollment of fewer than 10,000 students; receive Title I and Title II funds; are identified as a Priority District; have a three-year average teacher retention rate of less than 80 percent; if a Title I participating or eligible secondary school has a graduation rate of less than 60 percent during the past three years; and are in the highest quartile of school districts for percentage of both high poverty and minority students.

The deadline for submitting proposals is 4 p.m. Feb. 1. A technical assistance webinar for eligible applicants will be held from 4 to 5 p.m. Jan. 8. To register, visit

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2020324399543984897>.

## Educator Recognition

### Four Illinois Educators Among Top 50 Finalists for 2016 Global Teacher Prize

Four Illinois educators are among the top 50 finalists for the 2016 Global Teacher Prize. The Varkey Foundation started the award, dubbed the “Nobel Prize” for teaching, in 2014 to raise the stature of the teaching profession.

The top 50 were selected from thousands of nominations and applications from 148 countries. Illinois’ finalists are:



**Joe Fatheree of Effingham High School** – Joe’s students learn by producing music, books, and short films on topics like poverty, death, bullying, homelessness, and human rights. His students also use 3D printing and drone technology in their

projects, build educational games for young children using Minecraft, and engage in public speaking. Read more at [www.globalteacherprize.org/finalist/joe-fatheree](http://www.globalteacherprize.org/finalist/joe-fatheree).



**Jacqueline Lopushonsky of Lincoln Elementary School (Wheaton)** – Jacqueline has dedicated her teaching to English language learning and children with learning disabilities and behavior disorders. Many of her

students meet or pass state tests in the areas of reading, writing, and math and have also won countless awards and recognition in academic, speech-, and fine arts-related competitions. Read more at [www.globalteacherprize.org/finalist/jacqueline-lopushonsky](http://www.globalteacherprize.org/finalist/jacqueline-lopushonsky).



**Paul Solarz of Westgate Elementary School (Arlington Heights)** – Paul has created a Global Awareness Curriculum to help his students learn about other cultures. This includes

Skyping with authors and experts from other parts of the world, and “Mystery Skyping” with students in other countries. He has identified 34 different 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills that pupils need to learn and helps each of them record their progress with these. Read more at [www.globalteacherprize.org/finalist/paul-solarz](http://www.globalteacherprize.org/finalist/paul-solarz).



**Mark Vondracek of Evanston Township High School** –Mark promotes global awareness and citizenship by focusing on political debates where science plays a role, and he encourages and coaches students who enter

academic contests. His Project Excite works with middle school children from minority backgrounds to improve their science and mathematics skills in preparation for AP courses in high school. Read more at [www.globalteacherprize.org/finalist/mark-vondracek](http://www.globalteacherprize.org/finalist/mark-vondracek).

The winner will receive the \$1 million Global Teacher Prize award and will be announced at the Global Education and Skills Forum in Dubai in March. Congratulations to these outstanding educators!

## Special Education Services

### Revised Child Health Examination Form – for School Year 2017-18

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) and ISBE have revised the 2013 Child Health Examination Form required for school entry. The use of the new form is optional for school year 2016-17 and required the following year.

The new form is posted at [www.isbe.net/school\\_health.htm?col9=open#CollapsiblePanel9](http://www.isbe.net/school_health.htm?col9=open#CollapsiblePanel9) and at [www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/life-stages-populations/maternal-child-family-health-services/school-health](http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/life-stages-populations/maternal-child-family-health-services/school-health).

Students entering Illinois schools at kindergarten (or first grade if not enrolled at kindergarten), sixth and ninth grades must provide any Illinois public or private school, including charter schools, proof of physical examination on a form approved by both the IDPH and ISBE. The physical exam also must be provided by students entering Illinois schools for the first time at



any grade level (entering from out of state or out of country). The examination must be completed no earlier than a year (365 days) prior to the start of attendance in an Illinois school.

### **School Health Update**

IDPH invites school nurses and others who provide school health services or assure compliance with student health requirements to attend one of five repeated training sessions this winter. The dates and locations are:

- Feb. 23 - Rend Lake Resort & Conference Center, 11712 E. Windy Lane, Whittington, IL 62897, (618) 629 -2211
- Feb. 24 - Northfield Inn & Suites Center, 3280 Northfield Dr., Springfield, IL 62702, (217) 523-7900
- March 1 - Radisson Hotel & Conference Center Rockford, 200 S. Bell School Rd., Rockford, IL 61108, (815) 226-2100
- March 2 - Hyatt-Lisle, 1400 Corporetum Drive, Lisle, IL 60532, (630) 852-1234
- March 3 - Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Chicago, 75 W. Algonquin Road, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, (847) 364-7600

Registration information will be provided in January.

### **State Board of Education Recognized for Work on Vaccine Compliance**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Dec. 16 will recognize the collaborative work that ISBE has done with IDPH to assure that adolescents are properly vaccinated against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis. The CDC recognition will be provided during a virtual awards ceremony that recognizes IDPH for achievements, including the following: “For the last three years, staff from the Illinois Department of Public Health has collaborated with the State Education agency to prepare parents and health care providers with appropriate messaging 12 months prior to commencement of vaccination requirements for Tdap for all students in grades 6-12 beginning in the fall of 2013 and meningitis (MCV4) for students entering grades 6 and 12 beginning in the Fall of 2015.”

### **School Nurses Receive Awards from Professional Association**

Two Illinois registered nurses have been recognized by their professional nursing association for outstanding work as a school nurse or nurse administrator. Mary Girardi, RN, School Nurse of the Year, was cited for her exemplary work. Girardi is employed by Elgin School District Unit 46.

Susan L. Gerardot, RN, was also recognized for excellence in school nurse administration as the School Nurse Administrator of the Year. Gerardot is employed by Plano School District 88. Each of the nurses holds a Professional Educator License endorsed for school nursing, issued by ISBE. The nurses were nominated by their peers with support from their school districts and received their awards at the annual Illinois Association of School Nurses conference held in Lisle Oct. 23-24.

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### **College and Career Readiness**

#### **Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education Project Earns National Award**

Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education (FCAE) of Rantoul has received the National Association of Agricultural Educators (NAAE) Outstanding Cooperation award.

Funds from the ISBE budget’s agricultural education line item support the FCAE project, which was established in 1989. Six FCAE program advisors provide on-site technical assistance and support to each of the 381 secondary agriculture teachers in Illinois. Last year, 96 percent of agriculture programs in the state were visited at least once by an FCAE program advisor.

Due to the effort of current and past FCAE staff, agriculture teachers in the state have online access to more than 1,200 lesson plans that are aligned to the Common Core and Next Generation Science standards. The curriculum includes lesson plans, power point presentations, online student content, reading and comprehension assessments, and Common Core math assessments.

FCAE staff also plan professional development programs for agriculture teachers, helping them stay up to date with technical and teaching skills. To recruit

new agriculture teachers, FCAE conducts the Elite Conference, a day-long experience that targets academically high-achieving students and encourages them to become agricultural educators.

The award was presented at the NAAE annual convention in New Orleans on Nov. 20.

### **FY 2016 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC Self-Monitoring Evaluation Packet Now Available**

The fiscal year 2016 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (CCLC) Self-Monitoring Evaluation packet is now available. Please note that the evaluation is only for current grant recipients.

Each 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC grant will require a separate completed packet to be submitted. Grantees must follow three steps for each grant:

1. Complete the [online Self-Monitoring Evaluation](#).
2. Complete and mail the [Self-Monitoring Evaluation Certification form](#) with original signatures.
3. Complete and mail the [co-applicant Program Assurances form](#) with original signatures.

Mail the above documents to the following address:

Attn: Pam Bokamp  
Illinois State Board of Education  
College and Career Readiness Division  
100 N. 1st St. (N-242)  
Springfield, Illinois 62777

Completed packets are due by Dec. 22.

Any questions you may have should be directed to Sarah Ogeto via email at [sogeto@isbe.net](mailto:sogeto@isbe.net) or by phone at (217) 524-4832.

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### **Nutrition and Wellness Programs**

#### **USDA Foods Show Conference Schedule**

ISBE and the Illinois School Nutrition Association (ILSNA) are hosting a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Foods Show conference at two locations in January.

The first event is scheduled for Jan. 12 at Abbington Banquets in Glen Ellyn. The second event will take

place Jan. 14 at Gateway Center in Collinsville. Click [here](#) to register.

The foods show will include updates from ISBE's Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division, a food exhibit, and an opportunity to win professional development vouchers to be used at future ILSNA/SNA events. Participants will also earn professional standards continuing education hours.

### **Presentation Proposals for Annual Illinois School Wellness Conference Due Jan. 15**

Illinois Action for Healthy Kids (IL AFHK) invites individuals with expertise in school health and wellness to submit session ideas for presentation during the ninth annual Illinois School Wellness Conference. The conference is scheduled for April 28 at the Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway, in Springfield.

AFHK is specifically interested in presentations that 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. Presentations will be selected based on the need for the topic as it relates to school health and wellness and the speaker's knowledge and expertise on the subject.

More information and the proposal application is available for download [here](#). The deadline to submit proposals has been extended until 5 p.m. Jan. 15.

Those with questions should contact Adenike Sosina at [asosina@actionforhealthykids.org](mailto:asosina@actionforhealthykids.org) or (312) 436-0499 ext. 110.

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### **School Recognition**

#### **Applicants Sought for "Schools of Opportunity" Recognition Program**

The National Education Policy Center's "Schools of Opportunity" Recognition Program is seeking applications from outstanding public high schools. The project, which is being launched nationally this year, recognizes public high schools for what they do to give all students the chance to succeed, rather than turning to test scores to determine school quality.

The application deadline is Jan. 20. To learn more and to apply, visit <http://opportunitygap.org/>.

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## Assessment and Accountability

### Update: Pre-ID Assessment Data Now Available in SIS

Please note the following about the PARCC Pre-ID:

1. If a student currently enrolled in grades 4-12 took the PARCC test in 2014-15 and is scheduled to take PARCC in 2015-16, SIS has pre-populated the Personal Needs and Preferences (PNP) information from 2014-15 data as validations allowed.
2. Schools must review all PNP information for accuracy and make edits as needed since some Pre-ID field have changed from 2014-15. Please refer to the 2015-16 PARCC Pre-ID layout online at [www.isbe.net/sis/pdf/parcc-pre-id.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/sis/pdf/parcc-pre-id.pdf).
3. For grades 9-12, verify correct course mapping and PARCC Test Code (i.e., ELA09, ELA10, ELA11, ALG01, GEO01, ALG02, MAT11, MAT21, MAT31) by reviewing students on the PARCC Pre-ID report. As of Dec. 15, SIS is working to resolve a programming issue with the grades 9-12 records.
4. PARCC student data will be captured on Jan. 15 for the initial transmission to Pearson.

Please note the following about the Dynamic Learning Maps – Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) Pre-ID:

1. All students currently enrolled in grades 4-12 who were assigned to DLM-AA in 2014-15 and currently have their IEP indicator set to yes in SIS will be automatically identified as DLM-AA in the Pre-ID file. Only grades 3-8 and 11 students are required to take DLM-AA for accountability. Other grades are loaded so students may participate in optional instructionally embedded tests. Please double check this for accuracy and edit as needed.
2. All students currently enrolled in grade 3 are automatically identified in SIS with PARCC as the test to be taken. If you have a grade 3 student who qualifies to take the DLM-AA, you must edit their assessment information in SIS from PARCC to DLM-AA.

3. In late January, ISBE will upload information for students taking DLM-AA into Educator Portal based on the Pre-ID in SIS. Please make sure students who qualify for the DLM-AA are marked accordingly in SIS. This is when student names will appear in Educator Portal. Once this student upload is completed, the PNP can be entered directly in Educator Portal by the test administrator.

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## Illinois Green Ribbon Schools

### Application Deadline Extended for Illinois Green Ribbon Schools Program

The Illinois Green Ribbon Schools program recognizes schools that are leading the way to promote sustainability and environmental education. Working in partnership with ISBE, USGBC-Illinois is accepting [applications](#) from schools that integrate best practices in energy, water and waste management, healthy school environments, and environmental education. Winning applications for the Illinois Green Ribbon program demonstrate progress and achievements in each area of the three pillars:

1. Reduce environmental impact and costs;
2. Improve the health and wellness of schools, students, and staff; and
3. Provide environmental education, which teaches many disciplines, and is especially good at effectively incorporating STEM, civic skills, and green career pathways.

The deadline to submit applications has been extended to noon Jan. 22. Applications are scored by a panel of individuals with strong backgrounds in the three pillars. The top scoring schools are submitted to the U.S. Department of Education's Green Ribbon Schools Program for consideration at the national level.

Click [here](#) to complete the 2016 Green Ribbon Schools application. For more information, visit [www.usgbc-illinois.org/index.php?s=green+ribbon](http://www.usgbc-illinois.org/index.php?s=green+ribbon).

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## In Brief

### School Opportunities

- The **21st Century Learning Exemplar Program** is accepting applications for its 2016-17 Exemplar

cohort. The program helps the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning identify, document, promote, and celebrate examples of successful 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning. It provides educators and communities a variety of models to draw from and offers policymakers and P21 State Partners local examples to help encourage their support. To learn more, visit [www.p21.org/exemplar-program-case-studies/about-the-program](http://www.p21.org/exemplar-program-case-studies/about-the-program).

## Student Resources

- **ACLS Medical Training** has compiled a list of more than 30 educational scholarships for individuals with disabilities. The list is available at [www.aclsmedicaltraining.com/financial-aid-opportunities-for-disabled-individuals/](http://www.aclsmedicaltraining.com/financial-aid-opportunities-for-disabled-individuals/).
- Homeless college students face unique and sometimes impossible challenges in their quest for higher education. **OnlineColleges.net** has put together a guide to navigating college while homeless. The guide, which includes resources to help students, is available at [www.onlinecolleges.net/for-students/homeless-student-guide/](http://www.onlinecolleges.net/for-students/homeless-student-guide/).

## Student Opportunities

- High school and college students can enter the ninth annual \$10,000 **Create-A-Greeting-Card Scholarship** contest sponsored by The Gallery Collection. The deadline for submissions is Feb. 25. Contest rules and other details are available at [www.gallerycollection.com/greeting-cards-scholarship.htm](http://www.gallerycollection.com/greeting-cards-scholarship.htm).

## Educator Opportunities

- The **University of Northern Iowa Overseas Recruiting Fair** is set for Feb. 5-7, 2016, in Waterloo, Iowa. The annual event aims to connect international K-12 schools with certified educators. For more information about the event, visit [www.uni.edu/placement/overseas/](http://www.uni.edu/placement/overseas/).

## 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>.