



July 28, 2009

Message from State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

Many of you saw that draft "Race to the Top" guidance has been released. This U.S. Department of Education competition requires that states demonstrate considerable reform around four areas: 1) internationally benchmarked standards and assessments; 2) data systems to support instruction; 3) great teachers and leaders; and 4) intervention in the lowest-performing schools and districts.

We have been working for some time to position Illinois to be competitive for these funds. As you know, we are already moving forward with work on standards and assessments through the American Diploma Project and the Common Core Initiative. In addition, we received a federal grant earlier this year for Longitudinal Data System (LDS) implementation and we proposed legislation for LDS that has since passed in the General Assembly. There are many more reforms required in this Race to the Top competition that we are pursuing. The U.S. Department of Education has clearly signaled that for states to be competitive, reforms must be system-wide, innovative and ambitious.

Local Education Agencies are set to receive 50 percent of the Race to the Top funding, and some of you may be asking, "How do we as local LEAs obtain this funding?" At this point, there is no clear guidance on how states would distribute Race to the Top funds to LEAs. However, it appears that to obtain funding, districts must commit to the far-reaching reforms identified in the state's plan. We will be working with your representative organizations to ensure that you have a voice in the application Illinois puts forward.

We will make every effort to obtain these funds and look forward to working with you toward that end.

As you know, the General Assembly approved a budget for FY 2010 that, while increasing General State Aid and Mandated Categoricals, cut the Illinois State Board of Education's budget for other programs by \$442 million. I support increased funding for GSA and MCATS, as these dollars provide the most flexibility to districts to meet local needs. On the other hand, I am incredibly disheartened by the fact that our board was forced to make \$442 million in cuts from other critical ISBE programs.

These cuts are painful. I know that, the board knows that and you know that. The public is only now beginning to learn of this reality. Over the next two months, as the new school year begins, this pain will become even more evident.

Sadly, as the new school year begins and Illinois citizens begin to understand the FY 2010 budget reality, we need to begin preparing legislators as well as all citizens for the catastrophe that lies ahead in FY 2011, when we will need an additional \$1 billion to make up for the federal stimulus funds that supported us in FY2009 - and again in this year's budget - but will disappear after this fiscal year.

I would urge you to continue communicating with your lawmakers so that they understand the magnitude of this situation.

Table of Contents

Race to the Top ..... 2
Student Assessment ..... 3
English Language Learning ..... 3
Grants and Programs ..... 4
Special Education and Support Services.... 4
ARRA ..... 4
Curriculum and Instruction ..... 5
Nutrition ..... 5
Employment Opportunities ..... 6
In the News ..... 6

Additionally, program staff is determining the impact to grant areas that are being affected by the budget reductions. They will be communicating with grantees over the coming days.

Finally, I want to thank all of you for your patience, understanding and professionalism as we have worked through what is at best, a very difficult situation.

Chris

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## Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Differentiated Accountability Flexibility Applications due** – July 31
- **FY 2009 State and Federal grant projects ending Aug. 31 submit amendments and project extension requests** – Aug. 1
- **Modified End of Year Report on IWAS** – Aug. 1
- **Deadline for entering data in IWAS on the 2008-09 High School Students Taking Community College Courses** – Aug. 1
- **Statewide Youth Summit** – Aug. 10
- **Deadline for waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2009** – Aug. 14
- **TSR Salary Data** – Aug. 15
- **Reading Improvement Block Grant Performance Report** – Aug. 17
- **Part 120 (Pupil Transportation Reimbursement), Part 180 (Health/Life Safety Code for Public Schools), Part 252 (Driver Education), Part 401 (Special Education Facilities Under Section 14-7.02 of the School Code), and Part 675 (Providers of Supplemental Educational Services):** Public comment period ends Aug. 20
- **Hooked on Hydroponics application deadline** – Sept. 18
- **Bright Green Dream Challenge entry deadline** – Sept. 25
- **National Public Lands Day** – Sept. 26
- **U.S. Senate Youth Program and Heart Scholarship application deadline** – Oct. 7
- **Annual Superintendents’ Conference in Springfield** – Oct. 27-28

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## Race to the Top

### Information Sought on School District Procurements of ‘Assessments for Learning’

The criteria proposed by the U.S. Department of Education for the “Race to the Top” competition proposes that states, in cooperation with school districts, establish a plan to build toward college- and career-readiness through a number of activities, including formative and interim assessments. The state superintendent also believes that school districts need to have access to a broad range of assessment tools to diagnose student learning needs and improve instruction.

To those ends, ISBE is interested in cooperating with school districts that are procuring or considering procuring “Assessments for Learning” to determine

whether the contracts can be included within the statewide education purchasing program. As contemplated by ISBE, Assessments for Learning include:

- universal screening/benchmark assessment data collected periodically (e.g., quarterly) indicating whether most students are meeting benchmarks in a particular academic area, measuring student learning during the previous period of instruction that can help determine student progress toward year-end objectives and identifying areas requiring greater focus;
- formative assessments that are more diagnostic in nature and provide teachers with information on how to teach specific curricular areas to address student learning needs; and

- other assessments that yield descriptive data that can be used to improve instruction throughout the school year.

ISBE has created, pursuant to Section 28A-10 of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/28A-10), an education purchasing program. Through the education purchasing program, ISBE has the authority to “certify” an education purchasing contract as a statewide purchasing contract provided the contract was entered into according to procedures and conditions that conform to applicable state purchasing laws and administrative rules. Participation by Illinois school districts in certified education purchasing contracts meets the bidding and advertising requirements in Section 10-20.21 of the Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/10-20.21(d)).

ISBE is not seeking to interfere with any school district’s ability to procure “Assessments for Learning” outside of the state education purchasing program. By making a contract eligible for the program, however, a school district may be able to realize savings based upon a higher volume of services through the extension of the contract to other school districts. Participation in the program may also help facilitate integration of the assessment and data reporting services offered under the contract with other statewide initiatives.

If you are considering procuring or are in the process of procuring “Assessments for Learning,” and are interested in learning more about possible participation in the state education purchasing program, please email [tleezer@isbe.net](mailto:tleezer@isbe.net).

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## Student Assessment

### Public School Choice

Final AYP for elementary and middle schools and elementary districts has been posted on IWAS. If schools are identified to offer Choice, through their AYP notification posted in IWAS, the school/district must notify parents at least 14 days prior to the first day of school of their child’s option to transfer. For more information on Choice please review the following PowerPoint found on the agency’s Web site at [http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/school\\_choice\\_7-27.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/school_choice_7-27.pdf).

If the school is identified as having to offer SES, they are required to provide notice to parents, and it must be in an understandable, uniform format, in a language the parents can easily comprehend informing them of the availability of SES, the identity of approved providers within the

district or reasonably available in neighboring districts, and a brief description of the services, qualifications, and demonstrated effectiveness of each such provider. For more information on SES, please review the PowerPoint found on the agency’s Web site at [http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/ses\\_presentation\\_7-27.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/grants/pdf/ses_presentation_7-27.pdf).

Both notices must be approved annually by ISBE prior to distribution. Please contact **Ev Deimel** at 217-524-4832 or [edeimel@isbe.net](mailto:edeimel@isbe.net) for assistance relating to Choice and SES notices.

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## English Language Learning

### ROE ELL Professional Development Initiative Grant

The Division of English Language Learning has announced the opportunity for Regional Offices of Education to apply for grant funding for fiscal year 2010 to provide professional development to local rural or other small districts on state and federal laws related to servicing English Language Learner (ELL) students, including the identification, assessment and provision of academic instruction to ELL students.

The ROE ELL Professional Development Initiative Grant (Sept. 1-June 30) provides \$2,000 in FY10 Title III SEA Professional Development funds per eligible ROE to enable ROEs with small and rural school populations to: update ROE knowledge of required services for LEP students and provide professional development to rural or other small local school districts that are experiencing the enrollment of ELL students for the first time or are now experiencing a major influx of ELL students.

Funding for the grant is contingent upon the availability of Title III funds. ROEs that received FY09 grants, as well as eligible ROEs that did not apply in FY09, are eligible to apply. Criteria for ROE eligibility are identified in the application. ROEs may apply individually or in consortia for this grant.

Completed applications must be postmarked by **Friday, Aug. 7**. Submit proposals to:  
*Robin M. Lisboa, Division Administrator*  
*Illinois State Board of Education*  
*English Language Learning Division*  
*100 W. Randolph St., Suite 14-300*  
*Chicago, IL 60601-3268-3169*

For more information, contact **Sherry Johnson** at 312-814-3850. Applications are available at [http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/pdfs/initiative\\_grant.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/pdfs/initiative_grant.pdf).

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## Grants and Programs

### 48th Annual U.S. Senate Youth Program Hearst Scholarship

Information for the U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship is available online at <http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/hearst.htm>. Each high school will receive a mailing from the state superintendent concerning the program and scholarship during the first week in August.

The first phase of this program brings two students from each state to Washington, D.C., March 6-13 to participate in the U.S. Senate Youth Program (USSYP). Delegates will be immersed in Washington activities throughout their weeklong stay. The William Randolph Hearst Foundation will pay all expenses for the week, including transportation, hotel and meals.

The second phase awards both recipients a college scholarship of \$5,000. The Hearst Foundation requires that to obtain scholarship funds, a student must, within two years after high-school graduation, enroll at an accredited college or university in the U.S. The student is encouraged to include courses in government or related subjects to his or her undergraduate program.

In addition to the application in the August packet, applications can be obtained on the Illinois State Board of Education Web site at [http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/42-60\\_hearst.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/42-60_hearst.pdf). A hard copy must be received by ISBE no later than 5 p.m. on **Wednesday, Oct. 7**.

More information on this program can be obtained at <http://www.hearstfdn.org/ussyp/>, or contact **Sally Veach**, principal education consultant, at 217-524-4832 or [sveach@isbe.net](mailto:sveach@isbe.net).

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## Special Education and Support Services

### Indicator 13 Data Verification Process

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each state to submit a six-year State Performance Plan (SPP) designed to evaluate the state's efforts to implement the requirements of IDEA and describe how the state will improve its implementation.

As a part of the SPP, states are required to list improvement activities for each indicator. One of the improvement activities under Indicator 13, or Secondary Transition, is implementation of a data verification process to address the completeness and accuracy of these data. These data are submitted to the ISBE through the Funding and Child Tracking System (FACTS) for students with IEPs ages 14½ and above.

Beginning with data submitted for the 2008-09 school year, ISBE will implement this data verification process with a randomly selected sample of districts that reported 95 percent or higher compliance for Indicator 13. Selected districts for this data verification process will be notified by early August and will be required to submit IEPs for a randomly selected sample of students. The transition plan components of these IEPs will then be reviewed, and ISBE will follow-up with these selected districts.

For more information regarding Indicator 13 and secondary transition planning, please review the technical assistance resources available at <http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/indicator13.htm>.

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## ARRA

### Guidance for Reports on Use of ARRA Funds

The federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) recently released guidance for carrying out the reporting requirements included in Section 1512 of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. The guidance requires sub-recipients that receive ARRA funds, such as districts, regional offices of education, joint agreements and other local education agencies, to obtain a D-U-N-S number and register with the Central Contractor Registration (CCR).

Q: What is a D-U-N-S number and who provides it?

- A: Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) maintains a business database of information on businesses worldwide. D&B provides a D-U-N-S number which is a unique 9-digit identification number for each physical location of a business organization. D-U-N-S number assignment is free for all entities required to register with the U.S. federal government for contracts or grants.

Most school districts already have a D-U-N-S number. Please check with your business office to ensure that your district has this number. If the district does not have

a D-U-N-S number, please register at <http://www.dnb.com>.

Q: What is a CCR?

- A: The Central Contractor Registration (CCR) is the primary database for the federal government. CCR collects, validates, scores and disseminates data in support of agency acquisition missions. Since October 2003, it is federally mandated that any organization wishing to do business with the federal government under a Federal Acquisition Regulation-based contract must be registered with CCR before being awarded a contract. There is no cost to registrants. Additional information is available at <http://www.ccr.gov>.

Please check with your business office to determine whether your district is registered with a CCR, and if not, access the CCR link and register. Note: You must have a D-U-N-S number before registering with CCR.

If your district needs to obtain a D-U-N-S number and/or register with CCR, please allow sufficient time to complete the process.

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## Curriculum and Instruction

### Illinois Virtual School expands

Illinois Virtual School (IVS), formally the Illinois Virtual High School, has been expanded to serve students in fifth through 12th grades through partnerships with districts, schools, parents and other entities providing educational services. Registration for fall 2009 term is open. Visit <http://ILvirtual.org> to view the course catalog, complete an IVS application and register for a class.

IVS offers a variety of courses to meet the needs of students: AP courses, credit recovery, standard courses to assist with low enrollment classes and elective courses. Middle school language arts and mathematics courses will be available in the spring. For more information about IVS courses, enrollment or how to become a partner school, visit the Web site above or email [helpdesk@ILvirtual.org](mailto:helpdesk@ILvirtual.org).

### National Public Lands Day

Sept. 26 marks the nation's largest hands-on volunteer effort to improve and enhance the public lands that Americans enjoy. This year, many National Public Lands Day efforts will monitor and clean-up bodies of water. For more information, contact <http://www.publiclandsday.org>.

### Firefly Watch

Firefly Watch is a citizen science project that combines an annual summer evening ritual with scientific research. The Museum of Science in Boston has teamed up with researchers at Tufts University and Fitchburg State College to track the fate of fireflies. For more information contact <https://www.mos.org/fireflywatch/>.

### Hooked on Hydroponics

When children and teens explore how to grow plants hydroponically, fruitful questions bloom, which can lead to active investigations and problem solving. Eligible schools or youth organizations must plan a hydroponics project with at least 15 children between the ages of 6 and 18 during the 2010 school year. Application **deadline is Sept. 18**. Award packages include grade-appropriate kits and curricula. For more information, contact <http://www.kidsgardening.com/grants/HOH.asp>.

### Bright Green Dream Challenge

The Bright Green Dream Challenge encourages teachers and students to evaluate their classroom environment and propose creative solutions for increasing energy efficiency, enhancing the learning environment and reducing their carbon footprint. The winning entry will receive a \$15,000 sustainable classroom upgrade to be installed in their school later this year. The entry **deadline is Sept. 25**. For more information contact <http://www.greenovationnation.com/Dream/>.

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## Nutrition

### The Outlook newsletter online only as part of going green initiative

As a "going-green initiative," Nutrition Programs will no longer mail copies of The Outlook newsletter to the 4,000 plus Illinois schools. Readers will be informed via e-mail when each month's issue has been posted online.

This enables the division to provide information quickly in a fiscally responsible manner. Therefore, it is important to update contact information. The online application for sponsors can designate information for the authorized representative and one contact person, and each site can have one contact person.

To accomplish an update; complete the following:

- Login to IWAS
- Choose System Listing

- Click on Child Nutrition ACES
- 4. Select Sponsor (for program type choose NSLP for 2009 for the current year, or choose 2010 [2010 option available August 2009]). If you make the change to your 2009 application before completing your 2010 application, the information will carry over.
- Once the Sponsor Name, Agreement Number, and Select a Link box appear, go to the Select a Link box and select View Sponsor Application
- The sponsor application will appear. Go to the e-mail address for the contact(s) you need to update.
- Delete the e-mail address(s) currently in the field and then type in the new one(s). Scroll to the bottom of the screen and click on Submit to ISBE in order to save the changes. This can be done for each site by going to the Select a Link box again and selecting View Sites; all site numbers, site names, and a Select a Link box will appear. You need to access each individual site to make updates. For each site, go to the Select a Link box and select, View Site Application. When the site application appears, update the e-mail address and scroll to the bottom of the screen and click on Submit to ISBE to save all changes. If you have multiple sites to update you will need to update each one of the sites.

The Outlook newsletter is published every year August through May. Readers can view and print The Outlook newsletters, current, archived and annual indexes at [www.isbe.net/nutrition](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition), click on Newsletters. Expect August’s issue of The Outlook issue announcement the first week of August.

Join The Outlook Newsletter ListServe: If you are not identified as the contact person on the Application per instructions above and would like monthly notices with The Outlook newsletter link, then sign-up at the Outlook ListServe. Just e-mail [Outlook10-join@list.isbe.net](mailto:Outlook10-join@list.isbe.net) and type in your email address only in the message section; that is all that is necessary. You will receive confirmation. If you have any questions, please e-mail **Joan Love** at [jlove@isbe.net](mailto:jlove@isbe.net) or call 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491. Please do not sign-up for the ListServe if you are listed as the contact person on the sponsor and/or site applications.

## U.S. Department of Agriculture Food Distribution Program and Illinois Commodity System Workshops

Nutrition Programs staff is providing U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Distribution Program (FDP) and Illinois Commodity System (ICS) Trainings at seven sites in November and December 2009. The sessions focus on the Illinois Commodity System, placing annual commodity orders, diversions to processors, the Department of Defense (DoD) Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program and additional monthly processes to teach better management of USDA foods. Some workshops are scheduled from 12:30 to 4 p.m. with registration beginning at noon. Other sessions are scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to noon with registration beginning at 8 a.m. Preregistration is required and space is limited.

### 12:30 p.m. workshops

- Nov. 3 .....Galesburg
- Nov. 12 .....Schaumburg
- Nov. 17 ..... Marion
- Dec. 2 ..... Springfield

### 8:30 a.m. workshops

- Nov. 4 ..... Bloomington
- Nov. 13 ..... Tinley Park
- Nov. 18 .....Fairview Heights

For more information and to register, go to <http://webprod1.isbe.net/cns/calendar/asp/EventList.asp> and scroll down to the USDA Food Distribution Program and Illinois Commodity System.

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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/090724.htm>.