



Sept. 15, 2009

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

We all chose to become educators for many of the same reasons, but the central one is because we want to see young people learn and thrive. We want to motivate them, help them to be safe and ensure they become good citizens.

I am writing this column today to urge you and your students to refrain from texting and limit cell phone use while driving.

Car crashes are the leading cause of death among teenagers. The link below is a video that was produced for schools in the United Kingdom to discourage teens from texting while driving. Its message is as relevant for teens as it is for adults, both in Great Britain and Illinois. It is graphic and not for the faint of heart. It carries a powerful message. www.fox40.com/news/headlines/ktxl-news-ukvid-fullvid0817,0,6653954.story.

While this video is aimed specifically at teens, it's a lesson all of us can learn. I am a former offender. My job means many hours behind the wheel of a car and as I drove, I would sometimes answer e-mails on my BlackBerry. No more. I am urging my staff to stop this unnecessary and dangerous practice and I am also urging you, your staff and our students to stop texting while driving.

Additionally, Governor Quinn signed into law a measure that makes it illegal to text while driving. The law goes into effect January 1, 2010, and it also makes it illegal to talk on a cell phone while driving through a construction zone.

I know some of you have been involved in the Illinois Department of Transportation's Operation Teen Safe Driving. This program was recently recognized by the Governors Highway Safety Association as "the gold standard for developing a public/private teen driver safety program."

Since Operation Teen Safe Driving began in 2007, the number of teens killed in car crashes in Illinois has decreased by 40 percent. You can access more information about Operation Teen Safe Driving at <http://www.teensafedrivingillinois.org/>.

Finally, the Illinois State Board of Education officially kicks off its budget crafting sessions on Tuesday, Sept. 15, in Champaign. The Finance and Audit Committee will continue to host a series of meetings on the FY 2011 budget throughout the state over the next several months. A listing of when one will be held near you follows in the Weekly Message.

Have a great week.

Chris

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Upcoming Dates and Deadlines

- **Superintendents' Conference call for presenters deadline** – Sept. 15
- **School-based Child Nutrition Sponsor Applications due** – Sept. 15
- **Hooked on Hydroponics application deadline** – Sept. 18
- **Bright Green Dream Challenge entry deadline** – Sept. 25
- **National Public Lands Day** – Sept. 26
- **State Farm's Youth Advisory Board service-learning grants deadline** – Oct. 2
- **U.S. Senate Youth Program and Hearst Scholarship application deadline** – Oct. 7
- **Illinois Youth Dropout Prevention Summit** – Oct. 12
- **Deadline for submitting the 2009 Reduction in Force Survey** – Oct. 15
- **Part 100 (Requirements for Accounting, Budgeting, Financial Reporting and Auditing):** Public comment period ends Oct. 26
- **Annual Superintendents' Conference in Springfield** – Oct. 27-28
- **School District's Adopted Budget due at ISBE** – Oct. 30
- **Illinois Dropout Prevention Summit** – Nov. 4
- **Annual Statewide Transition Conference** – Nov. 8-10
- **Veterans Day moment of silence** – Nov. 11
- **Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet deadline** – Nov. 16
- **Annual Financial Report due at ISBE** – Nov. 16 (excluding those granted extensions due Dec. 15)

Finance and Audit Committee

ISBE Schedules FY 2011 Budget Hearings

The Illinois State Board of Education's Finance and Audit Committee will hold a series of hearings on the FY 2011 Budget over the next several months. The public is invited to attend. Please check back to the ISBE Web site for updates to the following schedule of hearings:

<http://isbe.net/calendar/default.htm>.

- Those wishing to participate in these hearings may sign-in upon arrival at each location.
- Please provide 15 copies of written testimony.
- Please provide cost estimates (including a detailed budget) for programs being discussed.
- Please address how proposed programs relate to the Board's Strategic Plan Goals.
 - Goal 1: Every student will demonstrate academic achievement and be prepared for success after high school.
 - Goal 2: Every student will be supported by highly prepared and effective teachers and school leaders.
 - Goal 3: Every school will offer a safe and healthy learning environment for all students.

The Finance and Audit Committee FY 2011 Budget Hearings will be accessible to persons with disabilities.

Persons planning to attend who need special accommodations should contact the Board office no later than the day before the meeting they wish to attend. Contact the Superintendent's office at the State Board of Education, Phone: 217-782-2221; TTY/TDD: 217-782-1900; Fax: 217-785-3972.

Here is a list of meeting locations and times. Times and locations are subject to change; please call to confirm.

- **Champaign:** 5-7 p.m., Sept. 15 at the Champaign Public Library, 200 W. Green St.
- **Mount Vernon:** 4-6 p.m. Sept. 24 at the Jefferson County Regional Office of Education, 1714 Broadway St.
- **DeKalb:** 4-6 p.m. Oct. 1 at the DeKalb Regional Office of Education, 2500 N. Annie Glidden Road.
- **Peoria Country:** 4-6 p.m., Monday, Oct. 19, at the Two Rivers Professional Development Center, 10112 W. Dubois Road in Edwards.
- **Chicago:** 3-5 p.m. Oct. 21, James R. Thompson Center.
- **Springfield:** 1-3 p.m. Oct. 28 at the Crowne Plaza, 3000 S. Dirksen Parkway.
- **Wheeling:** 6-8 p.m. Nov. 5 in the Board Room, CCSD #21, 999 W. Dundee Road.
- **Mundelein:** 6-8 p.m. Dec. 9 at the Lincoln School Multipurpose Room, 200 W. Maple.

Legal

New Law Requires Administrators Salary Compensation Report

Gov. Patrick Quinn recently signed Public Act 96-0434 (effective Aug. 13, 2009), which requires all Illinois school districts, including special charter districts, to create a salary compensation report for employees in the district holding an administrative certificate and working in that capacity, including the district superintendent.

The new law requires the report to be completed annually by Oct. 1 and posted on the district's Web site. The report must be presented at a regular school board meeting and submitted to the regional superintendent.

The new law also has an immediate requirement that school districts post all collective bargaining agreements online.

To read the text of the Act, go to the following link: <http://ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-0434>. Questions about implementation should be directed to your Regional Office of Education, school district attorney or appropriate professional association.

The governor also signed Public Act 96-0266 (effective Jan. 1, 2010). This new law requires, in part, school boards to "report to the State Board of Education ... the base salary and benefits" of school district employees to ISBE no later than July 1, 2010. To read the text of the Act, go to the following link: <http://ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/fulltext.asp?Name=096-0266>. ISBE will be providing information to assist school districts in this data collection, including information about how to submit the required data electronically to ISBE.

Funding and Disbursement Services

FY09 Expenditure Reports and First Quarter FY10 Expenditure Reports for Title I (4300) and Their Impact on Carryover

Title I, Part A, regulations limit local education agencies (LEAs) to carry over no more than 15 percent of the current year allocation for those grants of \$50,000 or more.

The total of both FY09 Title I expenditures and FY10 Title I expenditures through Sept. 30 are compared to the total funds available in FY09 to determine if a district will exceed the 15 percent carryover limit. Any funds in excess of 15 percent are deducted from the district's FY10 Title I allotment. This applies to both Regular Title I and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) Title I. It is important to monitor budgeted amounts and expenditures during FY10 to ensure at least 85 percent is expended during the current year program plus the first quarter of the subsequent year's (FY11) program so your district does not lose Title I allotment.

Please be timely in submitting your FY09 and FY10 expenditure reports. And remember that expenditure reporting for ARRA funds must be completed within seven days of the end of each period, where other expenditure reports are due 30 after the end of the period.

If you have questions regarding this issue, please contact Sally Cray or Kim Lewis in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

Excess Cash on Hand for Federal Programs and Imputed Interest

Federal regulations prescribe basic standards and methods under which federal payments are distributed from the Illinois State Board of Education to local education agencies (LEAs). Although reimbursement is the preferred method, federal regulations allow for LEAs to be paid in advance as long as the time elapsed between the receipt of the federal funds and actual expenditures at the LEA is minimized. It is imperative that all LEAs examine the monthly payment schedules on their federal grant programs to ensure that the receipt of federal funds correspond as closely as possible to anticipated expenditures. While this standard applies to all federal programs, it is especially important as funds are received for programs under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Salaries and fringe benefits are normally expended in equal intervals and should be projected in this manner. When teachers are paid on a 12-month salary basis and the project period is for nine months, the three months' salaries and related fringe benefits paid after the project ends (and after the service has been rendered/activity has occurred) should be included in the last project payment. Equipment, supplies, contracted services and in-service activities should have the payment requested in the month for which the expenditure is anticipated.

The information above is from Page 10 of the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures, which can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbook.pdf. The Grant Administration Policy describes the proper procedures for completing the payment schedule when a salary is being requested on a 12-month basis and the project period ends on June 30.

Expenditure reports are required to be submitted for each federal program on a quarterly basis. Excess cash is determined when expenditures plus outstanding obligations are less than the funds received through each quarter. Any positive balance will be frozen from the payments scheduled for the LEA until a subsequent expenditure report is submitted with a zero or negative balance.

In addition, Federal regulations address requirements when interest is earned on Federal cash advances. Specifically, the regulation states: [G]rantees and subgrantees shall promptly, but at least quarterly, remit interest earned on advances to the Federal agency. The grantee or subgrantee may keep interest amounts up to \$100 per year for administrative expenses.

Imputed interest is calculable on any excess cash balance regardless of whether the LEA deposits federal funds in a non-interest bearing account.

Checks for interest earned on federal funds should be made payable to the federal agency issuing the grant (e.g. U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Labor) and sent to the Illinois State Board of Education

If you have questions regarding this issue, please contact Kim Lewis or Sally Cray in the Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256.

Special Education and Support Services

Timely and Meaningful Consultation With Private Schools

It is the time of year when your district should be planning to complete its annual timely and meaningful consultation (TMC) with private schools and families of home-schoolers with disabilities. Please remember that this is a requirement for any district that has known home-school students and private school students with disabilities regardless of whether your district has funds to expend on these students. Please note the requirement

to provide families in your district with a public notice of the TMC requirement even if you do not have any private schools in your district. The specific steps for conducting TMC can be found in our guidance memo located at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/guidance_06-2.pdf.

Sample letters and invitations can be found at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/guidance_06-2.pdf.

The written affirmation form is available online at <http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/pvtschAppA.pdf>.

Please plan on completing your TMC no later than **Oct. 15**. Documentation is to be submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education, Special Education Services, ATTN: Judi Stoppelwerth, 100 N. First Street, Springfield, IL 62777 no later than **Nov. 1**. Contact Special Education Services at 217-782-5589 if you have any questions.

Third Annual Nonpublic Special Education Conference and Programs Showcase

Registration is now open for the third annual Conference on Best Practices for Nonpublic Special Education Programs to be held Nov. 16 and 17 at the Hilton in Oak Lawn. While this conference is intended for administrators of nonpublic special education programs approved under Section 14-7.02 of the School Code, public school Special Education Directors and others who might be interested are welcome to attend.

In addition, many nonpublic programs will have exhibit tables creating a networking opportunity between public schools and private special education programs. During this special “exhibit” session, attendees will be able to speak directly with private school officials and dialogue about services and programs provided by the nonpublic sector.

Proposals for conference sessions are being accepted through Oct. 2. Session presenters will address innovative programming and procedures that their schools utilize while working with students with severe disabilities. Presenters will receive discounted registration but no other reimbursement.

Conference information is available via our Web site. Registration: <http://webapps.isbe.net/ISBEConference>. Call for Presenters: http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/np_handouts/2009/np_presenters.pdf.

For questions, please contact **Paul Nijensohn** or **Sarah Sebert** at 312-814-5560 or via e-mail at pnijenso@isbe.net or ssebert@isbe.net.

Special Educator Work Load Plans

Beginning with the 2009-10 school year, all school districts are required to adopt a plan specifying limits on the work load of their special educators (see 23 Illinois Administrative Code 226.735 at <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/226ark.pdf>).

To help address inquiries from the field about the work load plan, the Illinois State Board of Education has posted an overview document that discusses the requirements for developing the plan, along with a PowerPoint resource that provides examples of such things as a process for developing and possible components of a work load plan and ways to analyze the activities delineated in the state rules. As stated in the overview document, districts are not required to submit the plan to ISBE for review or approval but must maintain a copy on file locally.

Both the overview document and PowerPoint resource can be accessed at <http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/Default.htm>. Questions can be directed to the Special Education Services Division at 217-782-5589.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

New Guidance Available Online

The U.S. Department of Education recently posted new guidance for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Links to the following documents are available at http://www.isbe.state.il.us/arra/html/fed_arra.htm.

- Using IDEA Part C ARRA Funds to Improve Outcomes for Infants and Toddlers With Disabilities and Their Families
- Using ARRA Funds Provided Through Part B of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to Drive School Reform and Improvement
- Using Title I, Part A ARRA Funds for Grants to Local Educational Agencies to Strengthen Education, Drive Reform, and Improve Results for Students

LEAs Reminded to Return Survey

Some local education agencies (LEAs) in Illinois have been selected to participate in an online survey from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). The survey asks questions regarding how LEAs plan to spend funds provided by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). LEAs that have received the survey request from GAO are strongly encouraged to respond to this survey as soon as possible. The deadline was Sept. 4, but it has been extended.

ARRA requires GAO to oversee how states and localities spend the funds. Illinois is one of the states selected to be monitored by the GAO over the next few years. GAO has issued two bi-monthly reports to Congress, in April and July, and will continue reporting through calendar year 2011.

As part of the next phase of a review process, GAO has created an electronic survey to gather information from LEAs across the country. The LEAs were selected by GAO on a random basis and were sent an e-mail with access to a Web-based questionnaire on Aug. 21. The survey relates to the initial allocation of ARRA education funds, including Title I, IDEA and state fiscal stabilization dollars. The results of this survey will be summarized at the national and state levels in the GAO's December bi-monthly report.

For more information, contact **Charlie Willson** at 202-512-5906, **Michelle Verbrugge** at 202-579-6873 or **Kathy Peyman** at 202-512-9536.

Superintendent's Conference

Presenters sought for annual event

The annual Superintendent's Conference is just around the corner and needs presenters to talk about college and career readiness, new staff mentoring and many more topics.

A list of suggested topics is available at http://www.isbe.net/supts_conf/2009/09_call_presenters.pdf, along with an application form and additional information. Additional session ideas are welcome too. The form deadline is **Sept. 15**.

The conference is set for Oct. 27-28 at the Crown Plaza Springfield. Online registration can be accessed until Oct. 16 at <http://webapps.isbe.net/ISBEConference/>.

Former Colorado Gov. Roy Romer, who now serves as senior adviser to the New York-based nonprofit The

College Board, will be the keynote speaker. His resume includes Superintendent of Schools for the Los Angeles Unified School District and chair of Strong American Schools. Also speaking at this year's conference will be Michael Geisen the 58th National Teacher of the Year from Crook County Middle School in Prineville, Oregon.

For more information or questions about the conference, contact **Leigh Ann Smith** at 217-782-4870 or lsmith@isbe.net.

Data Analysis and Progress Reporting

2009 Reduction in Force Survey

The 2009 Reduction in Force Survey is available on IWAS for districts to submit data on tenured and non-tenured teacher dismissals due to reduction in force. The deadline for submitting the 2009 Reduction in Force Survey is **Oct. 15**.

As required by Section 10-20.26 of the Illinois School Code, please provide on the survey the requested information on dismissals, rehiring and eliminated positions.

To ask questions about the survey, please contact **Niann-Tsyr Chern** in the Data Analysis and Progress Reporting Division at 217-782-3950.

Nutrition

School Breakfast Incentives

The fiscal year 2010 budget has been signed; however, it includes a significant reduction in funding. It was a difficult decision as to what educational programs, including School Breakfast Program Incentives, would be reduced or eliminated.

It was determined that School Breakfast Incentives funding, which is comprised of three incentives, would be cut by about 50 percent from \$723,500 to \$361,800. With this amount, we will continue to fund as many School Breakfast Program Start-Up Grants (\$3,500 per site) as possible and will continue to fund the Additional 10¢ Reimbursement Incentive. The Additional 10¢ Reimbursement will be paid only in the fourth quarter of FY2010, and payments will most likely be pro-rated to fairly distribute the funds to those eligible statewide. More information on these incentives is available at http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/bfast_fa.pdf.

With the passage of Senate Bill 1957 (Public Act 96-0158), the third incentive, Universal School Breakfast Incentive, has been replaced with the Non-Traditional Breakfast Incentive effective July 1, 2009. Recognizing there are barriers to implementing breakfast in a traditional setting such as a cafeteria, this incentive will make grants available to school boards to offer the School Breakfast Program in a non-traditional setting or using non-traditional methods. Priority will be given to schools that are on the Early Academic Warning List. However, with the cuts to this year's budget, the Non-Traditional Breakfast Incentive will not be made available in FY2010.

Aside from these breakfast incentives, you are still eligible for federal reimbursements for meals served if you participate in the School Breakfast Program. These rates are available at http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/school_reimbursement.pdf.

Many difficult decisions had to be made and we appreciate your commitment to serving breakfast. If you have additional questions, please contact Shawn Rotherham in the Nutrition Programs Division at 800-545-7892.

School-based Child Nutrition Sponsor Applications Due Sept. 15

The Sponsor/Site Applications to participate in the National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, Special Milk Program and/or After-School Care Snack Program during the 2009–10 school year are accessible through IWAS (ISBE Web Application Security)/Application and Claim Entry System (ACES).

Applications will cover operating months of October 2009 through September 2010 and are due no later than Sept. 15. For instructions on completing the applications, see <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/instructions.htm>.

Professional Development

Free, Online School Bomb Threat Training Available

“The midst of a crisis is not the time to start figuring out who ought to do what. At that moment, everyone involved – from top to bottom – should know the drill and know each other,” says Margaret Spellings, former U.S. Secretary of Education.

New Mexico Tech’s Energetic Materials Research and Testing Center uses that quote to promote its free, online course for school personnel to be prepared for the unthinkable – a bombing crisis. The class, Understanding & Planning for School Bomb Incidents, is sponsored and certified by the Department of Homeland Security.

The training covers such topics as threat assessment, warning signs of aggressive student behavior, effective response plans and recognition of homemade explosive devices. For more information or to register, visit <http://www.emrtc.nmt.edu/training/upsbi.php>.

Questions? Contact Barbara Kuhns at bkuhns@emrtc.nmt.edu or 575-524-6815 or Richard Campbell at rcampbell@emrtc.nmt.edu or 575-835-5054.

Student Opportunities

Students Urged to Compete in Annual Illinois History Expo

The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency invites junior high and high school students to compete with their history-related projects. The Illinois History Expo is an annual competition held in early spring in four regions across the state.

Students can enter projects in the categories of research papers, exhibits, media and performances. See <http://www.state.il.us/HPA/2008%20Expo%20Flyer.pdf> to see a breakdown of regions and information to participate.

Winners advance to a statewide Illinois Expo set for May 6 in Springfield. Projects will then be selected to represent Illinois at the National History Day competition, slated for June in Maryland.

For more information, call the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency Office of Education Services at 217-782-2981 or e-mail pete.harbison@illinois.gov.

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>.

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/090911.htm>.