Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

This week the Board will meet in Springfield for its regularly scheduled April meeting at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday. Prior to the meeting, we will testify before the Senate Appropriations II Committee regarding the Board’s fiscal year 2016 budget request and the impact to the FY 2015 budget of legislation (PA 99-0001) that was recently passed and signed into law to reduce spending.

At the Board meeting, staff will outline the cuts and the impact to districts of PA 99-0001. The legislation reduced the State Board’s FY 2015 budget for the most part by 2.25 percent, with some exceptions. As a result of those exceptions, the actual reduction was a net overall decrease of 2.16 percent. Where possible, a disproportionate share of the cut to an appropriation was applied to the administrative allocation, thereby reducing the negative impact on districts.

The following are the revised prorations for General State Aid and mandated categoricals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Revised Proration</th>
<th>Original Proration</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General State Aid</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp. Ed. Personnel</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp. Ed. Private Facility</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>(3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding for Children Requiring Sp. Ed. Services</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp. Ed. Transportation</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td>(2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular/Voc. Transportation</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>72%</td>
<td>(1%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PA 99-0001 also provides for a new supplemental appropriation of $97 million to be distributed to school districts in financial distress, as stipulated in statute. The agency’s proposed distribution methodology for the $97 million appropriation in response to statutory direction protects school districts with a high probability of financial crisis as a result of the reductions. Additionally, those school districts that have lower Available Local Resources (ALR) on a per pupil basis and high concentrations of low-income pupils are protected by the agency’s proposal. The actual process will comport with existing statute, past practice and the statutory language within PA 99-0001. What staff is proposing is outlined in the Board memo that you may access at [http://isbe.net/board/meetings/2015/april/packet1.pdf](http://isbe.net/board/meetings/2015/april/packet1.pdf).
We have completed the Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) portion of the first administration of the new Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment. There were some limited local technology issues, which were expected; however, many of you have reported being pleased with the new assessment after the initial administration.

Since testing began last month, more than 7.4 million PARCC test sessions have been completed, with nearly 1.5 million completed by Illinois students. This represents a significant move toward online testing, which brings significant cost savings for the state over pencil-and-paper testing. More than 75 percent of Illinois students are expected to participate online during this initial testing cycle. The End-of-Year portion begins April 27.

Finally, I wanted to tell you about an initiative in East St. Louis to bring all third-grade students up to grade level in reading by the end of the year. East St. Louis District 189 and the local faith community are collaborating to develop and implement a reading mentorship program. The Read to Succeed program is seeking to pair 489 volunteer mentors to work one-on-one with the district’s third-graders at schools from 10 a.m. to noon each Saturday, April 11 through May 16.

The district administration put together the Read to Succeed challenge after a recent visit by Chairman James Meeks, who challenged the community to become more involved in the schools and take ownership for student success.

Have a great week!

Chris

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**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](http://www.isbe.net).

- **Dynamic Learning Maps Alternate Assessment (DLM-AA) testing window** – March 16 to May 8
- **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
- **Final deadline to submit data for EIS Employment, Position records and non-certified aggregated FTE counts** – April 15
- **“Finding Mathematical Tasks Within and Beyond the Model Math Curriculum” webinar** – April 21 ([https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6873385100705915650](https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6873385100705915650))
- **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
- **2015 “Now is the Time” Project AWARE-Community Grant application deadline** – May 1 ([www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-15-012](http://www.samhsa.gov/grants/grant-announcements/sm-15-012))
- **Spring 2015 PARCC ELA/L Field Test Administration** – May 4-June 5
- **TECH 2015 student showcase** – May 7
- Part 50 (Evaluation of Educator Licensed Employees under Articles 24A and 34 of the School Code), Part 228 (Transitional Bilingual Education) and Part 600 (Enrollment of and Payment for Nonresident Students at the Philip J. Rock Center and School) – Public comment period ends May 18
- Applications for the Exception to the 1.0 Percent Cap due – May 21
- ISBE offices closed for Memorial Day – May 25
- Application deadline for 2015-16 Student Advisory Council – May 29 (www.isbe.net/sac)
- “Lead … Focus … Connect: Every Student College and Career Ready” conference – June 23 (www.eventbrite.com/e/lead-focus-connect-conference-tickets-15693652136)
- 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.)
- ISBE offices closed for Labor Day – Sept. 7

**Teacher Recruiting and Retention Taskforce**

**District Superintendents Asked to Fill Out Short Tier II Pension Benefits Survey**

During the 98th General Assembly, House Joint Resolution 27 created the Teacher Recruiting and Retention Taskforce. The purpose of this task force is to study the impact of Tier II pension benefits on the ability of school districts to recruit and retain teachers in public school classrooms.

In order to ascertain the opinions of district leadership, the Teacher Recruiting and Retention Taskforce has created a short survey that will be helpful in analyzing potential impact of Tier II pension benefits.

The survey can be found at https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SuperintendentHRs_survey. The survey will remain open until Friday, May 1, 2015. If you have questions about the survey, please contact Vince Camille at vcamille@isbe.net.

**Data Analysis and Accountability**

**Final Reminder: EIS Deadline for Federal Requirements Approaching**

This last notice is to remind districts that the final deadline to submit data for Employment Information Systems (EIS) Employment, Position records, and non-certified aggregated full-time equivalency (FTE) counts is **Wednesday, April 15**, to comply with upcoming federal deadlines.

As covered in the January webinar “Introduction to 2015 EIS: New Features and Updates,” certain data elements have been altered or introduced to comply with upcoming federal deadlines. For a detailed description of these updates, please reference the webinar.

Again, the final deadline for 2015 EIS Employment, Position records, and non-certified employee aggregated FTE counts is **April 15**. Please submit the data using EIS or batch files. For tutorials explaining data entry with both EIS submissions and batch uploads, please see our brand-new EIS Basics Course.

For further EIS assistance, please contact the EIS help desk at (217) 782-3950 or email datahelp@isbe.net.

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

**Illinois Learning Standards**

**Model Math Curriculum Resources Webinar Scheduled for April 21**

Have you been introduced to the Model Math Curriculum Resources and want to explore more? Are
you ready to try a task in your classroom but aren’t sure where to find one?

Join us for “Finding Mathematical Tasks Within and Beyond the Model Math Curriculum,” the fourth installment in the Illinois State Board of Education’s Teacher-to-Teacher Webinar Series, airing at 3:30 p.m. on April 21.

Lewistown High School math instructor and Illinois Council of Teachers of Mathematics (ICTM) board member Anita Reid is presenting the webinar. Participants will delve into Livebinder, the online host housing the Model Math Curriculum, with time set aside to ask specific questions or receive direction in finding specific tasks. In addition, other online and print resources will be shared as well as methods for how to effectively search for tasks that best suit your classroom needs.

Participants are encouraged to bring along favorite task sites or print resources to share with the audience. Come with end-of-the-year content in mind and take away a task to try in your classroom.

- **Title:** “Finding Mathematical Tasks Within and Beyond the Model Math Curriculum” webinar
- **Date:** April 21
- **Time:** 3:30 p.m.
- **Register:** https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6873385100705915650

### School Health Issues

**Protect Against Meningitis; Vaccine Required at Sixth and 12th Grades**

A new vaccine is required for entry into grades 6 and 12 this coming school year, beginning August 2015. This vaccine protects students against a severe form of bacterial meningitis, as well as other diseases caused by this bacteria.

Please read the Illinois Department of Public Health parent letter and make plans to assure that your student is protected against meningitis and ready to start school in the fall. Please read more about this vaccine and the requirement at [http://isbe.net/school_health.htm?col12=open#idph](http://isbe.net/school_health.htm?col12=open#idph).

### Nutrition and Wellness Programs

**2015-16 Training Opportunities for School Nutrition Program Sponsors**

The Illinois State Board of Education’s Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division will host a variety of training opportunities for school nutrition program staff for the 2015-16 school year.

There is no registration fee for these workshops. Beverage service only will be available. Please save the date for the workshop(s) in your area that are applicable to your job duties.

Registration is now available online. For complete information, visit [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/) and select “Upcoming Workshops.” Locations often fill up quickly, so complete registration as soon as possible to secure your space.

**School Meals Menu Planning 101** (Held in conjunction with Direct Certification, Certification, and Verification workshops): This half-day workshop will be a beginner’s level hands-on workshop with menu-planning activities geared to the school nutrition personnel who plan the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Program menus. This workshop provides basic information about the breakfast and lunch meal patterns and nutritional requirements as well as offer versus serve. Each workshop location is limited to 50 attendees, so we request that each school register no more than two staff to attend this training. The dates and locations are:

- July 22 – Lisle (morning session with repeated afternoon session)
- July 23 – Normal (morning session with repeated afternoon session)
- July 28 – Fairview Heights (morning session with repeated afternoon session)

**Direct Certification, Certification, and Verification** (Held in Conjunction with School Meals Menu Planning 101 Workshops): This half-day workshop will be a training on the overall regulations related to the use of the Electronic Direct Certification System, certification of household eligibility applications and verification efforts. Staff members who work directly with the overall certification process at your school district are recommended to attend. The dates and locations are:
• July 22 – Lisle (morning session with repeated afternoon session)
• July 23 – Normal (morning session with repeated afternoon session)
• July 28 – Fairview Heights (morning session with repeated afternoon session)

Overview of the Administrative Review Process:
This half-day training will provide sponsors an overview of the Administrative Review (AR), including all USDA checklists and resources. The Administrative Review is an assessment the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) conducts of the School Food Authority’s (SFA) administration of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP), School Breakfast Program (SBP) and other school nutrition programs. The objectives of the AR are to determine whether the SFA meets program requirements, provide technical assistance, secure any needed corrective action and assess fiscal action, if applicable. ISBE must conduct ARs of all SFAs participating in the NSLP and/or SBP at least once during each three-year review cycle period. The first three-year review cycle began in the 2013-14 school year. The dates and locations are:
  • October 2015 – To be announced.

If you have any questions, please contact ISBE staff at (800) 545-7892 or via email at cnp@isbe.net.

Webinar on Professional Standards for School Nutrition Professions on April 16
The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) released the Professional Standards for State and Local School Nutrition Programs Personnel final rule on March 2.

This final rule establishes professional standards for state and local school nutrition programs personnel in regard to hiring for new school nutrition programs directors and establishes required annual training hours for all school nutrition programs employees. The final rule is effective on July 1.

Staff with ISBE’s Nutrition and Wellness Programs Division will host a webinar on this topic from 9 to 10:30 a.m. on April 16.

More information about the final rule, including a summary of the requirements, and the webinar registration link is available at www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/snp-prof-stds.htm.

Family Engagement
2015 National Family and Community Engagement Conference June 22-24
The Institute for Educational Leadership (IEL) will be hosting the 2015 National Family and Community Engagement Conference on June 22-24 at the Palmer House Hotel in Chicago.

This year’s theme is “Shaping our Future by Leading Together: Families, Schools and Communities.” The conference will highlight evidence-based practices and leadership at all levels, offering ample opportunities to examine how schools and communities around the country are realizing mutual goals and aspirations through productive partnerships. The conference will offer extended learning opportunities through networking at the local, state and regional levels, team planning and opportunities for in-depth discussions.

Seventy workshops will be available, highlighting high-quality family and community engagement on the following topics:
• Early learning and literacy (birth to age 8)
• Community partnerships
• Teacher leadership and professional development
• Systemic practice and policy
• Equity inclusive education
• Parent leadership and advocacy
• High school transitions/college and career readiness

Several Illinois-based schools, districts and community-based organizations will be featured and offering workshops. Visit the IEL conference webpage to learn more. Teams are encouraged to attend. To register, go to www.cvent.com/D/S4QT7N.

Service Opportunities
2015-16 Training Opportunities for School Nutrition Program Sponsors
Stories of philanthropy develop every day in our schools – the parent volunteer, the class service project, the corporate donor, the retiree-turned-mentor. These stories shape the school community, and the
Chicago Community Trust wants to celebrate these stories as part of its Centennial celebration.

On Tuesday, May 12, the Chicago Community Trust will host On the Table, with the goal of creating civic discourse and reflection about philanthropy. Last year, nearly 12,000 residents came together, taking part in 1,100 mealtime conversations to share their ideas for improving our region. The Trust invites you this year to host a mealtime conversation with your parents, staff, students, donors, partners and/or community members to showcase the ways you are already making our region great and inspiring others to do the same.

This initiative will celebrate philanthropy in all its forms (time, talents and treasures) throughout Chicago and the collar counties. On the Table hosts will be encouraged to ask those who attend their mealtime conversation to make a commitment toward making our region the most philanthropic in the country.

Starting with On the Table and throughout the year (May 2015 – May 2016), the Trust will amplify the everyday stories of philanthropy from across our region. This is a great opportunity for the school districts to tell their stories through the Trust’s channels reaching new audiences. Stories can be shared via Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter and the Trust will also share these stories on your behalf to showcase the stories of giving throughout the region.

Ideas for how schools can participate:

- Invite student service clubs to a brown-bag lunch to reflect on past and plan for future service projects.
- Foundation board members can be asked to bring one new potential donor to a breakfast conversation about ways to support the schools.
- Pizza dinners for parent volunteers as an opportunity to say thank you for their continued efforts to support the schools.
- Invite retiree mentors to bring a potential new mentor for a lunchtime conversation with students.

Visit www.onthetable.com to learn more and click on “Register” to sign up. Have questions about On the Table? Call (866) 737-6951 or email onthetable@cct.org.

Educator resources are available at http://onthetable.com/educator-resources/.

In Brief

Curriculum Resources

- Earth Day Network’s inaugural Climate Education Week is scheduled for April 18-25, and the network has developed an online toolkit for K-12 educators that provides climate science lessons, activities and videos that meet Common Core and Next Generation Science Standards. It also includes project ideas for Earth Day. For more information, visit www.climateeducationweek.org.

Student Opportunities

- The Illinois Heart Rescue Project invites Illinois high school students to write, edit, produce and upload to YouTube their own 90-second sudden cardiac arrest public service announcement (PSA). The purpose of this competition is to have students create fun and contemporary compression-only CPR videos. The videos will be judged on a local, regional and state level, and the top three will be posted on YouTube for the entire state to vote on the winner. The top video will be played at major sporting events in the Chicago area. Contest details are available at http://illinoisheartrescue.com/news/illinois-heart-rescue-sponsors-statewide-high-school-video-public-service-announcement-psa-competition/. The deadline for video submissions is April 15.

- Latino Art Beat has partnered with SPORTAMY, a youth sports-oriented website, to present the “What Sports Mean to Me” visual arts competition. Students can enter drawings or paintings in all media accompanied by a related essay of 350 words or less to compete for $1,000 (minimum) scholarship awards. Latino Art Beat is also offering its “2015 Youth Short Film Competition” to students under 21 who attend a high school or college in Illinois. Films must be original, with an original score and 15 minutes or less total running time. Film winners will qualify for scholarship support and screenings of their film. The deadline for all entries is May 25. No
entry fees are required. For more information, contact Latino Art Beat at (773) 291-6901, visit www.latinoartbeat.com or contact SPORTAMY at essaycompetition@sportsmy.com.

**Professional Development**

- The Indiana Department of Education is holding a **Summer of eLearning conference** on June 9-10 at Mount Vernon Senior High School in Illinois. This year’s theme is “Connecting the 4C’s - Communication, Collaboration, Critical Thinking and Creativity.” The conference will feature nationally recognized keynote speakers and provide numerous opportunities for educators to engage in hands-on activities and workshops. To learn more, visit www.connectingthe4Cs.org.

- The National Great Rivers Research and Education Center invites educators to attend a **Stream Discovery and Creek Freaks Workshop** May 16-17 in Elgin. Stream Discovery trains grade 5-12 educators on how to involve their student groups in water quality monitoring, analysis and stream cleanup. For more information or to register, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/creek-freaks-and-stream-discovery-training-workshop-elgin-il-tickets-13025707241.

- The **Illinois New Teacher Collaborative (INTC)** invites beginning teachers (all grade levels and content areas) who have just completed their first year of teaching in Illinois to the INTC Beginning Teacher Conference, “Y2: Moving Beyond Survival.” The two-day conference is scheduled for June 30 and July 1 in Champaign and will feature speakers, breakout sessions and networking opportunities. For more details and to register, visit http://intc.education.illinois.edu/events/btc2015/.

- The annual **Illinois School Health Association conference** is scheduled for April 10 at the Hyatt in Lisle. For more information and to register, visit http://ishaweb.com/state_conference.html.

- 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:
  - 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.