



# Illinois State Board of Education

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**Darren Reisberg**  
*Chair of the Board*

**Dr. Carmen I. Ayala**  
*State Superintendent of Education*

March 25, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

The theme in my communications with agency staff has been, “This is not business as usual.” We want to do everything we can to ensure you can focus on the critical work of feeding and educating students. To that end, we have instituted a moratorium on all ISBE Web Application Security (IWAS) notifications. We will review all pending IWAS data collections and communications over the next few days and move forward only with those that are deemed essential at this time. Thank you for your patience as we work on this.

In exciting food news, we have learned that [No Kid Hungry](#) is offering \$1 million in emergency grants, available immediately, for schools and community organizations who are finding innovative ways to make sure children have access to the meals they need. This national advocacy organization is supporting local efforts like home-delivered meals, grab-and-go programs, school and community pantries, backpack programs, and other steps to help reach children and families who have lost their access to meals. If you need funding to support your nutrition efforts, please submit your interest at [www.nokidhungry.org/coronavirus-grant-request](http://www.nokidhungry.org/coronavirus-grant-request).

We can all take inspiration from Peoria Public Schools, which has handed out more than 21,000 meals since March 17, including barbecue, crispy chicken, and other sandwiches that can either be eaten cold or taken home and heated up. I know the students appreciate those tasty options.

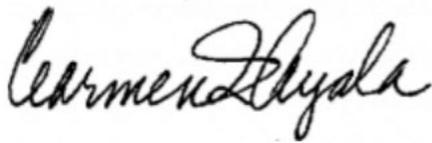
I am also happy to report that at least two more school districts have stepped up to share personal protective equipment to keep health care workers on front lines safe while they combat COVID-19. Community High School District 99 in Downers Grove delivered respirators, Tyvek suits, goggles, and approximately 15,000 pairs of gloves to Good Samaritan Hospital today. And a nurse Round Lake Area Schools Community Unit School District 116 donated 300 pairs of goggles, 29 boxes of surgical gloves, 150 rubberized dissection aprons to Advocate Lutheran General Children's Hospital. If your school or Career and Technical Education program has PPE to spare, please contact [ppe.donations@illinois.gov](mailto:ppe.donations@illinois.gov).

As schools across the state are engaging in remote learning, student journalists are showing us the sky truly is the limit. Geneva Community High School students lit up our morning here at ISBE with their [amazing and totally remotely produced newscast](#)! I also enjoyed this uplifting [news report](#) from Ethan Crabtree, a second grader from Ball-Chatham School District.

Educators across the state are also finding creative ways to remind their students how much they're missed. O'Fallon Township High School staff collaborated to create a lovely [video](#) full of messages to their students. And Chicago Hope Academy Principal Ike Muzikowski showed off his soccer skills, dance moves, piano chops, singing voice, and most of all, his exquisitely vivid imagination in this incredible [solo performance video](#).

Please keep sharing your talents and your hearts with your students and with us. It is appreciated more than you can imagine.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen I. Ayala". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'C'.

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala  
State Superintendent of Education  
Illinois State Board of Education