



Illinois State Board of Education

100 North First Street • Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001
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Darren Reisberg
Chair of the Board

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education

April 3, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

A principal who joined our webinar yesterday asked what to do with Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR) materials. Thank you for this timely question! Please be advised that all secure test materials will need to be returned to Pearson. You can find complete instructions on returning test materials in the email sent from Pearson today and on [ISBE's IAR webpage](#).

In my message yesterday, I mentioned that ISBE is working with the Illinois Department of Human Services to implement the Pandemic EBT (P-EBT) that will provide extra funding to families who have children who qualify for free or reduced-priced meals. In order to approve these benefits for families, IDHS needs our help to verify which children qualify to receive free and reduced-price meals. Some families' circumstances may have changed since the COVID-19 crisis began, so we want to ensure that the Student Information System (SIS) accurately reflects all children who qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

Please take some time to ensure that all students that meet the below definition of low-income are marked appropriately in SIS. We ask that this data be verified or updated by Friday, April 17, 2020. If your students are already marked as FRL/Low-Income Indicator in SIS, then no action is needed. Please just verify that all students who qualify as FRL/Low-Income are marked as such in SIS, so that their families will have the opportunity to access the P-EBT. Please keep this information current going forward to make sure that students who become eligible in the future are accounted for and their families gain access to these needed extra funds.

Low-income students are students/pupils ages 0 – 22 who receive or live in households that receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; are classified as homeless, migrant, runaway, Head Start, or in foster care through a local coordinator/State agency; or are living in a household where the household income meets the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) income guidelines to receive free or reduced-price meals.

You can review your FRL/Low-Income student data in the SIS Demographics (Summary and Detail) reports by following these instructions:

1. Login to SIS via IWAS.
2. Click on **Reports** in the menu on the left.
3. Click on the (+) next to **Student** and go to the "Demographics and Enrollment" section.
4. Click on **Demographics (Summary)**.
5. Note: On the criteria page, use the current date that it automatically defaults to as the **Enrolled as of Date**.

6. Click **YES** on the **FRL/Low Income Indicator**, and then Click **Create PDF Report** to generate the report.
7. Repeat these steps to run the **Demographics (Detail)** report.
8. Verify that the reported demographic data for FRL/Low-Income Indicator is accurate.

If you need Assistance with SIS, please contact the SIS help desk at (217) 558-3600, select Option 3, and ask for a SIS technician. If you have questions regarding School Nutrition Programs, please contact ISBE's Nutrition Department at cnp@isbe.net.

We have some additional exciting information that will help families to access meals. The USDA today announced the launch of an online tool – the “Meals for Kids” Site Finder – to help families find meals for children while schools are closed during the coronavirus pandemic. The [“Meals for Kids” interactive map](#) directs people to local sites where kids can get free meals. The map is available in both English and Spanish at www.fns.usda.gov/meals4kids.

[Food Finder](#) and [Nutrislice](#) have both developed solutions to increase nationwide access to these critical free meals. Food Finder will display USDA's Meals for Kids locations on their web and mobile app, while Nutrislice is offering their mobile ordering and meal locator solutions for free to hundreds of schools nationwide.

The [USDA National Hunger Hotline](#) is also available for anyone seeking food assistance. The hotline, operated by Hunger Free America, can be reached Monday through Friday between 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET at 1-866-3-HUNGRY (1-866-348-6479) or 1-877-8-HAMBRE (1-877-842-6273) (for Spanish).

Another resource that I would like to share is from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, which today launched [LearnAway!](#), a website where educators teaching birth to 12th grade can find and share resources, curriculum and ideas to support remote learning. The site represents a partnership between the Illinois Board of Higher Education, ISBE, professional organizations, educator preparation faculty, and educators across the state. It will soon offer 10- to 15-minute webinars with educators from around the country.

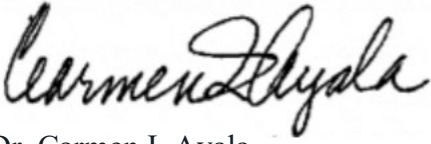
Nancy Latham, executive director of the Council on Teacher Education at UIUC, promises that the ideas and resources contributed to the site are reviewed for relevance and appropriateness and then tagged through a curation process to make it as easy as possible for teachers to find the supports they need.

I also received a link to a [website](#) full of resources for students who need speech therapy, occupational therapy, and adaptive physical education. The website was created by Laura Schroeder, who teaches at La Grange Area Department of Special Education, a co-operative made up of 15 member districts. All children can enjoy and benefit from these activities.

It's encouraging to be able to announce so many new resources available this week. I know this spirit of cooperation and collaboration will outlast and outlive this COVID-19 crisis.

In case you're like a lot of people working from home, you may have lost track of what day it is. Well, today is Friday! So please try to rest, recharge, and enjoy your weekend.

With gratitude for all you do,

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
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