



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 22, 2020

Dear Colleagues:

Today, I have an urgent request to help assist those who are supporting our state's emergency and essential employees. Across Illinois, the emergency child care providers who are spending their days with the children of first responders and other essential employees need basic cleaning supplies to keep their centers and homes safe.

If you have any supplies on hand that you could spare (even a gallon or two of disinfectant!), please reach out to child care programs in your community to address this urgent need. [This spreadsheet](#) can be sorted by county or school district and has contact information for all programs that have indicated that they are open and providing emergency child care.

And remember that you can apply now for Federal Emergency Management Agency funds to support deep cleaning your own district buildings when in-person instruction resumes. See my [message from Monday](#) for more details.

As always, please continue to check the [COVID-19 webpage](#) frequently for updates and information. Today, we posted [PreK-12 English Learner Provisional Identification and Placement Procedures During Remote Learning](#), which provides districts with step-by-step instructions for provisionally screening and placing English Learners via digital means when face-to-face screening is not possible, such as during the current COVID-19 emergency.

Today is the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, and several districts have found ways to celebrate. In Berwyn South School District 100, the [Piper School held a Zoom art show](#), and more than 56 families participated. They shared artwork, watched a video, and talked about landscape art. What a cool way to teach students creativity, self-expression, and about the important of the environment. District 73 Hawthorne Elementary North students [recycled, cleaned up litter](#) in their communities, planted, created signs, and more; while some students from Winfield District 34 [went on](#) individual nature scavenger hunts. Elgin Math and Science Academy Charter School [challenged](#) students to think about what they could do to help our planet and then create a flyer, commercial, or public service announcement, encouraging others to adopt that behavior as well. Thank you to everyone who helped our students celebrate Earth Day remotely through these awesome and engaging activities!

And that's not all -- April Jordan, the assistant regional superintendent for North Cook Intermediate Service Center, provided a [YouTube video of herself reading](#) "Sweet Lily Pitter-Patter, What You Do Surely Matters (To the Trees and the Bumbling Bees)" -- an environmentally-themed book that Superintendent Jordan wrote and published!

I would also like to congratulate the Joseph Sears School in Kenilworth, Illinois' K-12 recipient of the 2020 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon designation! The honor is given to schools for their commitment to healthy, safe, and sustainable learning environments. The Joseph Sears School is one of only 39 nationwide

honored for their innovative efforts to address the three “pillars” of the program: reducing environmental impact and utility costs, improving health and wellness, and ensuring effective sustainability education.

Earth Day is not the only holiday today. It’s also Administrative Professionals’ Day! This event gives me the perfect opportunity to tell Kim Clarke, my executive assistant, how much I appreciate her work. Many of you have interacted with Kim over phone and email and know how amazing and detail-oriented she is, and how lucky ISBE is to have her. We all know I’d be lost without her.

I’m going to leave you with a [link to get you through the rest of your week](#). Katie Bruton, choir teacher at Kingsley and Parkside junior high schools in McLean County, has revised a Broadway hit to make it all about social distancing, keeping clean, and missing our students. I feel sure it will make you smile.

Stay safe, stay home, and stay well!

Sincerely,

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

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent of Education
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