



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

A newsletter from the Illinois State Board of Education



October 2010

Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

The Illinois State Board of Education will be hosting a series of six budget hearings around the state as part of the annual budget development process the Board engages in to gather information in crafting their recommendation to the Governor and General Assembly for 2012.

Each participant that wishes to speak at the budget hearing will be asked to address three questions as they provide their testimony:

- 1) The State Board has prioritized General State Aid, mandated categoricals, such as special education and transportation, and early childhood, as budget priorities in the past. Should this focus continue during tough economic times?
- 2) The state has been unable to provide timely payments to districts for two consecutive years, thus making local planning difficult. What actions should be taken to address this situation?
- 3) In each of the last two years, the state budget has been supplemented by \$1 billion from federal stimulus funds. How should education expenditures change in the future with likely reduced federal spending, but no decrease in federally mandated programs? Should the state impose cost savings due to these reduced federal funds or leave cuts to the discretion of local districts?

The first budget meeting will be held on Monday, Oct. 18, at 2 p.m. in the James R. Thompson Center. The other five meetings are scheduled as follows:

- Wednesday, Oct. 27, 2010 — 3 to 5 p.m. — Springfield — ISBE Office, 4th floor Board Room, 100 N. First St., Springfield
- Wednesday, Nov. 3, 2010 — 5 to 7 p.m. — Mundelein — Carl Sandburg School Multipurpose Room, Mundelein S.D. #75, 855 W. Hawley St., Mundelein
- Monday, Nov. 8, 2010 — 3 to 5 p.m. — Belleville — St. Clair County Regional Office of Education, 1000 S. Illinois St., Belleville
- Monday, Nov. 15, 2010 — 4 to 6 p.m. — DeKalb — DeKalb County Regional Office of Education, 2500 N. Annie Glidden Road, DeKalb

Legislative Liasons: For questions or inquiries, contact Nicole Wills (nwills@isbe.net) or Cynthia Riseman (criseman@isbe.net) in the Governmental Relations Division at 217-782-6510 or by fax at 217-782-3097.

- Tuesday, Nov. 30, 2010 — 4 to 6 p.m. — Champaign — Champaign Public Library, Robeson Pavilion, Room C, 200 W. Green St., Champaign

In addition, we have created an e-mail account (isbefy12@isbe.net) that will be monitored by agency staff to receive additional testimony from individuals unable to attend the budget hearings.

In mid-September, the State Board met for its annual retreat and meeting. As part of that meeting the Board completed a self evaluation, reviewed and discussed its Strategic Plan, heard an informative presentation on school district reorganization, and discussed its potential legislative agenda for the spring.

The presentation on school district reorganization addressed a breakdown of current school district types and sizes, reviewed available means of reorganization under current law, the current incentives and disincentives to reorganization, and other related issues. The materials can be accessed at http://isbe.net/board/meetings/2010/sept_strat_plan/sd_reorg_pres.pdf.

As noted above, the Board also discussed its potential spring 2011 legislative agenda. This agenda will be discussed internally and externally with stakeholders over the coming months, but at this time, the State Board is contemplating the following:

- Revamping the Educator Certification System (Article 21 of the School Code);
- Aligning State and Federal Accountability Standards;
- Further alignment of Financial Oversight Panels and School Finance Authorities;
- Revisions to the Textbook Loan Program;
- Removing bilingual education from the Educational Services Block Grant for Chicago;
- Permanently terminating the General State Aid Hold Harmless program;
- Applying the Alternate Double Whammy formula to all Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) to school districts statewide ;
- Less Red Tape/Clean-up; and,
- Elimination or Modification of Unfunded Mandates.

For further explanation of these legislative proposals, please see http://isbe.net/gov_relations/pdf/leg_proposals_11.pdf.

We look forward to working with the Illinois General Assembly as the 96th General Assembly comes to a close and the 97th General Assembly commences.

Thank you all for your work on behalf of Illinois students.

Chris

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Education Jobs Funds

On Aug. 30, 2010, Illinois received an approved grant award for the new federal Education Jobs (Ed Jobs) Fund program in the amount of \$415,397,841. The Illinois State Board of Education provided a webinar to all local education agencies on Sept. 9 that advised LEAs as to how Ed Jobs funds could be requested, as well as the corresponding reporting requirements [which are the same as for other programs under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)].

Ed Jobs funds can only be used for compensation and benefit costs to retain, rehire or hire new employees. Allocations were calculated based on the proportionate share of gross General State Aid funds calculated for each LEA in FY 2011. Ed Jobs funds are being distributed to LEAs on a reimbursement basis per federal guidance. ISBE issued the first voucher to the Comptroller on Sept. 22 for 41 districts that requested funds in the amount of \$4,639,789. ISBE will voucher twice a month as year-to-date reports are submitted. LEAs are encouraged to request funds for eligible costs in the 2010-11 school year, but federal guidance allows LEAs to use unexpended funds in the 2011-12 school year. The last date for obligation is Sept. 30, 2012.

NCLB Survey

ISBE is conducting a short survey on the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), commonly referred to as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The survey can be accessed at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NCLBSurvey>. It asks for details on the most pressing issues that should be changed in the next version of the

law and also asks for the level of support or opposition to a number of broad proposals that may impact reauthorization. This survey is open to anyone and will allow ISBE to gain a broad understanding of viewpoints on potential changes to ESEA and Congress and the Administration contemplate reauthorization.

Streamlining Illinois' Educational Delivery Systems Task Force

PA 96-0798 required ISBE to establish the Streamlining Illinois' Educational Delivery Systems Task Force to examine all duties of the State Board of Education and all regional support systems for school districts, including without limitation the regional offices of education, intermediate service centers, special education cooperatives, education for employments systems, and learning technology centers and the support provided by the State Board of Education to City of Chicago School District 299, to determine what and how duties and responsibilities should be provided regionally for school districts in order to make sure districts are receiving services as efficiently as possible.

A final copy of the report has been filed with the Governor and General Assembly and can be seen at http://www.isbe.net/gov_relations/pdf/ed_del_tf_rpt10.pdf.

FY 10 and FY 11 Comptroller Backlog to School Districts

As of Sept. 27, the Comptroller has a backlog of \$756.5 million in unpaid vouchers issued by

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ISBE. The oldest voucher from ISBE is dated March 6, 2010. The total FY 11 backlog of vouchers issued by ISBE is \$197.5 million.

School Bullying Prevention Task Force Update

The School Bullying Prevention Task Force is charged with exploring the causes and consequences of bullying in schools, identifying promising practices in school districts that reduce incidences of bullying and evaluating the effectiveness of schools' current policies and bullying prevention programs. A report on the task force findings is due to the Governor and General Assembly on or before March 1, 2011. The State Superintendent finalized appointments to the Task Force in late August.

The first meeting of the Illinois School Bullying Prevention Task Force will take place Oct. 7 from 9-11 a.m. at the Illinois Safe School Alliance offices, 70 E. Lake St., Suite 900 Chicago. An agenda and meeting materials are posted on the Task Force website located at <http://www.isbe.net/SBPTF/default.htm>.

Proposed Rule Change – Testing Procedures

A proposed administrative rule to clarify when high school students are required to take the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) is currently out for public comment. No Child Left Behind requires that all schools test students at least once for accountability purposes while they are in high school. In Illinois, we are required by state statute to

administer the PSAE to 11th-graders for accountability purposes.

The agency noticed, as did the federal government, that a significant percentage of high school students were not being included in the State's accountability system because school districts did not consider them 11th-graders during the spring of their third year after eighth grade. Instead, these students appear to be taking the Prairie State Achievement Examination the following year as 12th-graders (a few months prior to graduating high school). In our compliance audit by the U.S. Department of Education earlier this year, the USDE directed ISBE to ensure that all students are being tested for accountability purposes.

The proposed rulemaking would require that all students take the PSAE in the spring of their third year after having successfully completed the eighth grade (with an exception for students with Individualized Education Programs). We anticipate this clarification will result in more consistency of PSAE administration throughout the state. Public comments will be taken on the proposed rules through Oct. 18 and individuals may submit comments at rules@isbe.net. Once the public comment period ends, the State Board of Education will have a chance to review comments and may or may not make changes based on those comments.

All pending rules can be reviewed at <http://isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm>.

2010 Legislation Passed by the General Assembly

A final list of all legislation from the spring session that became Public Acts and impact ISBE or school districts can be found at

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http://www.isbe.net/gov_relations/pdf/public_act_summary_10.pdf.

ISBE Board Meetings

The next meeting of the State Board will take place Oct. 27 and 28 in Springfield. A list of the remainder of Board meetings in 2010 can be found at

http://isbe.net/board/pdf/2010_board_meetings.pdf and a calendar of 2011 meeting dates can be found at http://isbe.net/board/pdf/2011_board_meetings.pdf.

Teacher of the Year

The Illinois State Board of Education announced in mid-September the names of eight finalists for the 2010-11 Illinois Teacher of the Year. The finalists, representing schools across the state, are selected from nominees through ISBE's Those Who Excel educator recognition program. A selection committee comprised of administrators, teachers and representatives from educational service personnel, student support personnel, and former Illinois Teachers of the Year reviewed more than 160 nominations for the award. Each nomination is individually reviewed and scored three times. Nominations are scored based on personal background information, the nominator's recommendation and additional letters of recommendation. In addition, nominees must answer questions focusing on student success, collaboration, continuous learning and leadership. Scores are compiled and averaged to determine the level of recognition nominees will

receive (Excellence, Merit, or Recognition). Teachers earning an Award of Excellence become finalists for Illinois Teacher of the Year.

The 2010-11 Illinois Teacher of the Year will be announced during the Those Who Excel banquet Oct. 16 at the Pere Marquette Hotel in Peoria. The Teacher of the Year represents Illinois at NASA Space Camp in Huntsville, Alabama and in the National Teacher of the Year Program sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers, ING and Target.

Illinois Teacher of the Year Finalists

- **Melissa Angeles** teaches science at Hononegah Community High School in Hononegah Community High School District 207.
- **Annice Brave** is an English and journalism teacher at Alton High School in Alton Community Unit School District 11.
- **Dennis Brown** teaches journalism and social studies at Huntley High School in Huntley Consolidated School District 158.
- **Jennifer Jarden** is a sixth grade language arts teacher at Trimpe Middle School in Bethalto Community School District 8.
- **Leanne Jebens** is a kindergarten teacher at Christa McAuliffe School in Kirby School District 140.
- **Kimberly Radostits** teaches Spanish at Oregon High School in Oregon Community Unit School District 220.
- **Susan Thomas** teaches social studies at Centennial High School in Champaign Unit 4 School District.

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- **Trish Vanderploeg** is an eighth grade teacher of English at Plum Grove Junior High School in Community Consolidated School District 15.

Going Green

In an effort to be more environmentally conscious, ISBE will be sending out communications, including budget updates and letters from the State Superintendent, via e-mail instead of through the mail. This effort will both reduce administrative time within the agency and provide cost savings for printing and mailing. In the future, the e-mail address used for this message will be the one used for all ISBE communication from the State Superintendent, Board and Governmental Relations staff. If you have an alternative e-mail address to which you would like this information sent, or if you change email addresses, please contact Nicole Wills (nwills@isbe.net) or Cynthia Riseman (criseman@isbe.net) in our Governmental Relations Division so that your information can be updated and so that you can receive this information in a timely manner.

Legislative Liaisons and General Assembly Scholarship Questions

For all constituent or bill inquiries, contact Nicole Wills (nwills@isbe.net) or Cynthia Riseman (criseman@isbe.net) in the Governmental Relations Division at 217-782-6510 or by fax at 217-782-3097.

If you have any questions or paperwork concerning General Assembly scholarships, those should be directed to Kim Clarke at kclarke@isbe.net or 217-782-4648.

School District Directory

A comprehensive directory of all public and non-public entities that provide services to K-12 students in Illinois is available on the ISBE website at

<http://isbe.net/research/htmls/directories.htm> by clicking on "Directory of Educational Entities." The directory includes contact information, administrators, grade levels served and legislative districts for Private and Public Schools, Public Districts and other Public Units like Regional Programs, Department of Corrections schools, Special Ed Cooperatives and Vocational schools. The directory is updated nightly as additions or changes are submitted to ISBE.

Regional Offices of Education

A list of all the Regional Offices of Education, Regional Superintendents and their contact information can be found at in the ROE directory at

<http://isbe.net/regionaloffices/pdf/roedirectory.pdf>.

This directory includes the contact information for the three Intermediate Service Centers in Suburban Cook County which have taken over the duties of the Suburban Cook County Regional Office of Education that was abolished by Public Act 96-0893.

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