


**Subject:** ISBE's Weekly Message - Feb. 27, 2024  
**From:** Illinois State Board of Education <hello@isbe.net>  
**Date:** 2/27/2024, 4:24 PM  
**To:** mcateed@mokena159.org

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 [ISBE's Weekly Message. From Illinois State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders. ISBE logo.](#)

## February 27, 2024

 A child stands in front of a tri-fold display about cranes and holds a certificate.

*Ringwood Primary School in Johnsbury School District 12 recently held a science fair, during which students presented the results of their hard work.*

Dear Colleagues:

Governor JB Pritzker announced his proposed budget for fiscal year 2025 last week. The budget includes significant investments in prek-12 education, despite a tight budget landscape. Investments like these over his past five years in office have helped Illinois claim the fifth spot in the nation for best prek-12 education, according to [U.S. News & World Report](#).

The Governor's budget proposal reinforced Illinois' nation-leading commitment to education, including a \$350 million increase for Evidence-Based Funding – supporting sustainable, predictable, and stable advancement toward equity and adequacy for all districts – as well as another \$75 million to expand access to preschool for 5,000 more low-income children, as part of the Smart Start initiative; an additional \$30 million for Mandated Categorical

grants to raise the proration level for specific special education line items; and a \$10 million increase for Career and Technical Education to ensure every CTE system receives more or level funding as we implement the new funding formula. The Governor's budget proposal would also continue funding the Computer Science Equity Grant and the Teacher Vacancy Grant for a second year and would provide funding to support the implementation of the Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan.

I applaud Gov. Pritzker for his unwavering commitment to Illinois' students and his recognition of the major role that thriving, well-funded public schools play in ensuring the strength of communities across Illinois. You can view Gov. Pritzker's full [FY 2025 operating budget proposal](#).

One reminder: A budget proposal is just that – a proposal. Over the next few weeks and months, our Illinois lawmakers will discuss, debate, and ultimately decide appropriations for FY 2025. Thanks to your incredible efforts in schools every day, we have ample evidence to persuade them that dollars invested in education pay dividends for every Illinoisan. ([CNBC](#), for example, ranks Illinois second in the nation for education.) The work you do matters on many levels. Thank you for your dedication to this profession and the families of Illinois.

(P.S. - Hundreds of Illinois administrators and lawmakers have registered for my upcoming Fireside Chat about mental health and resiliency with Goldie Hawn. If you haven't secured your spot yet, check your email for your invitation. We plan to expand access to additional educators tomorrow.)

All my best,  
Tony

# UPCOMING ISBE DATES AND DEADLINES

*NOTE: ISBE has released a [Data Collections Key Dates calendar](#), which shows a compiled schedule for all data collections managed by the Data Strategies & Analytics department.*

**Feb. 29:** [Deadline to submit FY 2025 Early Childhood Regional Community Systems Development for Illinois Request for Proposal](#)

**March 1:** [Application window opens to become an approved provider of training for school board members](#)

**March 1:** [Deadline to apply for School-Based Mental Health Project Grant](#)

**March 1:** [Deadline to register for free suicide prevention training from Illinois Department of Public Health](#)

**March 1:** [Deadline to report the intent to move from half-day to full-day kindergarten instruction in school year 2024-25 to \[sff@isbe.net\]\(mailto:sff@isbe.net\)](#)

**March 1-2:** [Illinois Teacher Leadership Summit](#)

**March 3-9:** [School Social Work Week](#)

**March 6:** [Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Office Hours](#)

**March 5:** [ACCESS testing ends](#)

**March 6:** [McKinney-Vento Homelessness Liaison Conference](#)

**March 6:** Discipline Dialogues Webinar Series: [Being Better to Make Our Schools Better](#)

**March 9:** [Illinois Resource Center Job Fair for ESL, Bilingual, & Dual Language Teachers, Aides, & Administrators](#)

**March 11-15:** [42nd annual Illinois Arts Education Week](#)

**March 13:** Webinar: [Out-of-School Time After ESSER: Blending and Braiding Funding](#)

**March 14:** [Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Office Hours](#)

**March 14-15:** [2024 WELL Summit](#)

**March 15:** [Deadline to submit nominations for the INSPRA Distinguished Service Celebration](#)

**March 15:** [Deadline to apply for the 2024 NLGA Lt. Governors' STEM Scholarship Program](#)

**March 19:** [Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Office Hours](#)

**March 22:** [Deadline to enter the 2024 National Center for State Courts essay contest](#)

**March 27:** [Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Office Hours](#)

**March 29:** [Deadline to apply for NBCT incentive grant](#)

**March 29:** [2023-24 5Essentials Survey administration window closes](#)

**April 13:** [Argonne National Laboratory's Middle School Electric Car Competition](#)

**April 22-23:** [2024 Illinois Association of Title I Directors Conference](#)

**April 30:** [Deadline to apply for School Food System Transformation Challenge Grants](#)

**May 18:** Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year Awards Banquet


**May 31:** [Deadline to apply for the High-Quality CTE for all Students Summer 2024 Cohort](#)

**June 15:** [Deadline to submit nominations for School Social Worker of the Year and Citizen of the Year](#)

**June 18:** [ISBE Career Connections Conference](#)

**July 8-12:** [Computer Science PD Week](#)

**Sept. 30:** ARP ESSER III Grant Programs end

 Fireside Chat with State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders and Goldie Hawn is 3 p.m. on March 4. This is a special event for Illinois lawmakers and school administrators. Photo of Tony and Goldie.

### **NEW! LEADERSHIP**

#### **Mental Health + Resiliency: Fireside Chat with Goldie Hawn**

You don't want to miss State Superintendent of Education Dr. Tony Sanders' next virtual Fireside Chat at **3 p.m. March 4**. Goldie Hawn, Academy Award-winning actress, producer, director, best-selling author, and founder of [MindUp](#), will join Dr. Sanders to talk about mental health and resiliency. This is a special event just for Illinois school administrators and lawmakers. Check your email for the invitation and claim your seat before access expands.

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### **NEW! LEARNING RENEWAL**

Each week this section will focus on the learning renewal that is taking place in Illinois schools. We invite you to [share](#) how you are investing federal relief funds to help students recover.

 Social-Emotional Learning Well-Being Survey Available in April. Logos for ISBE and AIR.

### Invitation for District Leaders: Explore Student and Staff Well-Being

ISBE is partnering with American Institutes of Research (AIR) to conduct a comprehensive Social Emotional Learning Well-Being survey for Districts or schools. ISBE has [announced](#) the members of the 2024 Illinois Teacher of the Year Cohort, including the 13 finalists for [2024 Illinois State Teacher of the Year](#). The annual Teacher of the Year program honors incredible classroom educators who have made lasting impacts on the students, families, and fellow educators in their school communities. ISBE will showcase cohort members in the Weekly Message each week leading up to the announcement of the 2024 Illinois State Teacher of the Year this<sup>3r</sup> spring. Congratulations to all this year's extraordinary awardees!<sup>nd</sup> enhancing social-



Congratulations! Stacey Rickard, East Central Regional Teacher of the Year from Salt Fork Community Unit District 512. Headshot of Stacey Rickard

### Stacey Rickard

***East Central Regional Teacher of the Year***

***Salt Fork High School, Salt Fork Community Unit District 512***

As an agriculture educator at Salt Fork High School in Salt Fork Community Unit District 512, Stacey Rickard has grown the FFA chapter from 22 students to 135 (more than half the school) in just four years. Mrs. Rickard has more than 13 years of experience as an agriculture educator and grew up on a grain farm herself. Mrs. Rickard's contagious enthusiasm for agriculture serves as the driving factor behind the remarkable expansion of the program at Salt Fork. Her distinctive teaching methodology prioritizes hands-on labs, real-world applications, and an unwavering commitment to engaging students. Mrs. Rickard exposes students to the diverse array of opportunities available and ignites their drive to aim for unimaginable

accomplishments.

Her proudest accomplishment is establishing AgVenture, taking students beyond Illinois' corn and bean fields to visit the nation's largest feedlot in Kansas and see cattle branded in South Dakota. Her students collaborated with a local farmer to create an ongoing nitrogen study, using math to take measurements, science skills to craft lab reports, English skills to write speeches, and history to engage policymakers.

She plays a highly active role within Salt Fork community, serving as the Salt Fork FFA adviser, assistant volleyball coach, Class of 2025 sponsor, and a member of the Curriculum Committee. She also dedicates her time to the state Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers (IAVAT) Board as the District 4 representative and fulfills the role of Section 18 IAVAT treasurer. Additionally, Mrs. Rickard serves as a mentor to new agricultural teachers across the state, further demonstrating her commitment to the field of education.

Stacey was awarded the Section 18 Golden Owl 2022 and 2023, Golden Ruler 2022, and teacher of the week by the Champaign News-Gazette.



Congratulations Mallory Tolley, West Central Regional Teacher of the Year  
Knoxville CUSD 202. Headshot of Mallory Tolley

### **Mallory Tolley**

***West Central Regional Teacher of the Year***

***Knoxville High School, Knoxville Community Unit School District 202***

Mallory Tolley is an agriculture educator at Knoxville High School in Knoxville Community Unit School District 202, where she advances citizenship, leadership, and service in her students as they learn to become productive members of society. In her 12th year of teaching, she helps her students learn where their food comes from and how to produce it through agriculture science, mechanics, business, and horticulture courses. She teaches students welding and veterinary science to help them prepare for success in college and the trades.

She also serves as the FFA adviser and has grown the chapter from 37 members to 111. Emphasizing community service, she has led her students in projects ranging from landscaping around the local nursing home to building 10 "pallet" beds for children in foster care. Mrs. Tolley's latest project is the culmination of a plan hatched three years ago, when a cafeteria side dish of chips and salsa gave her the idea of growing salsa ingredients on campus. She persuaded the school board to approve her plan and then fundraised more than \$120,000. The building and greenhouse have been completed, and the hydroponics system is set to be delivered. A community garden and orchard will round out Mrs. Tolley's plan to bring the "farm to fork" concept to the Knoxville campus.

Mrs. Tolley achieved one of many personal goals in 2014 when she received her master's degree in Educational and Interdisciplinary Studies through Western Illinois University. Mrs. Tolley stays actively involved on her family's farm and helps her two children raise and show Berkshire pigs and Angus cattle.



#### School Board Membership Training Application Available May 1

### **NEW! IMPROVEMENT & INNOVATION**

#### **Provider Application - School Board Membership Training**

School board members are required to complete four hours of professional development leadership training covering topics in education law, financial oversight and accountability, fiduciary responsibilities of a school board member, and, beginning with the 2023-24 school year, trauma-informed practices for students and staff. (See [105 ILCS 5/10-16a.](#)) Entities that offer professional development activities – such as training organizations, Regional Offices of Education, professional associations, teachers' unions, institutions, firms, and higher education providers – may apply to ISBE to become approved providers of school board member leadership training.

The provider application window opens **March 1**. All applications must be submitted on or before **May 1** to [DDSL@isbe.net](mailto:DDSL@isbe.net). See the [ISBE School Board Member Training](#) The Northern Illinois University Illinois CTE Project team, in collaboration with ISBE, designed an online asynchronous course for Career and Technical Education (CTE) training and how to apply, educators that is offered three times a year. "High-Quality CTE for all Students" is a course designed to introduce educators to student-centered diversity, equity, and inclusion topics. [Register for the summer 2024 cohort by May 31.](#)

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### 2024 Career Connections Conference

ISBE's Career Connections Conference is a premier event that offers collaboration, innovation, and inspiration to CTE educators throughout Illinois. The 2024 conference will be held on **June 18** at Tinley Park Convention Center. At Career Connections, educators come together to exchange ideas, share best practices, and foster meaningful connections with their peers about how to best prepare our students for successful futures. [Register now for the 2024 Career Connections Conference](#). Early bird and group rates are available.




Illinois High School 2 Career now available in Arabic

### Illinois High School 2 Career Now Available in Arabic

ISBE, the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), and the Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) are pleased to announce that the [Illinois High School 2 Career](#) tool and tutorial videos are now available in [English](#), [Spanish](#), and [Arabic](#). Illinois High School 2 Career is an interactive career exploration tool that helps students make informed decisions about life after high school.

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 University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's School to Work transition guide is now available

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **School-to-Work Transition Guide Now Available**

The [School-to-Work Transition Guide](#) was recently released for Illinois students with disabilities who are transitioning from school to work. Readers of the guide will discover important steps and stages in the school-to-work transition process, as well as Illinois-specific guidelines, key terms, legal information, and resources relevant to different roles and responsibilities.

The School-to-Work Transition Guide was created by the Illinois Transition Study group in conjunction with the Illinois Center for Transition and Work at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, ISBE, and the Division of Rehabilitation Services in the Illinois Department of Human Services.

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 Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Office Hours. Image of plan cover, ISBE logo.

## TEACHING & LEARNING

### Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan Office Hours

Join ISBE for [Office Hours](#) for the [Illinois Comprehensive Literacy Plan](#). This opportunity aims to provide you with a direct line to the ISBE literacy team, offering a platform for questions or discussions about the plan.

The time will be freely structured with no planned presentation. Participants are encouraged to join at any time during the hour and stay as long as needed. Whether you have specific inquiries or are looking for further clarification on any part of the plan, the ISBE literacy team is here available to enhance your understanding of the literacy plan.

Please note the schedule for upcoming sessions:

- **3-4 p.m. Feb. 28**
- **Noon-1 p.m. March 6**
- **3-4 p.m. March 14**
- **Noon-1 p.m. March 19**
- **3-4 p.m. March 27**

### FY 2024 District Technology Survey

ISBE invites each superintendent or their designee within each school district to complete the fiscal year 2024 Illinois School District Technology Survey in IWAS, in accordance with [105 ILCS 5/10-20.74](#).

The goal of the survey is to provide a snapshot of the current state of Illinois school districts related to key aspects of technology in K-12 education.

. Some questions involve technology infrastructure or instructional practices, and survey participants are encouraged to collaborate with other leadership team members to complete questions accurately.

This year the technology survey is being administered through IWAS. Click "System Listings," "Surveys," then "FY 2024 Technology Survey." If you do not have access to this, you'll need to request access for it in the Signup for Other Systems Menu.

Please contact [egrauke@isbe.net](mailto:egrauke@isbe.net) or [support@lrcillinois.org](mailto:support@lrcillinois.org) for questions about the FY 2024 Illinois School District Technology Survey.



School-based mental health project grants. Apply by March 1. Stress & Trauma Treatment Center logo

## WELLNESS

### **SY 2024-25 School-Based Mental Health Project Grants**

Schools that are expanding their mental health support services for the 2024-25 school year by hiring a school counselor, social worker, or psychologist may qualify for \$25,000 to offset the cost of such a position. Schools across the state are encouraged to apply. If you meet the poverty threshold for a school in your district (60 percent for elementary and 45 percent for non-elementary), you are invited to complete the application and submit it by March 1. The application takes less than 10 minutes to complete. Additional information can be found on the [Stress and Trauma Treatment Center website](#). Please direct any questions to [Dr. Matt Buckman](#) or [Dr. Martha Weld](#).

### **2023-24 5Essentials Survey**

The 2023-24 5Essentials Survey window is open until **March 29**. Participation in this or an approved alternate survey is required annually. Student participation in the survey is among non-academic indicators used to determine [summative designations](#) for accountability.

A 5Essentials student and teacher report will be generated if a school meets the minimum thresholds of a 50% response rate and at least eight teacher and 10 student respondents. A parent report will be generated if a school meets the minimum thresholds of a 20% response rate and at least eight parent respondents. Check out [ISBE's tip sheet](#) for increasing parent participation in the survey. Listen to the We Love Illinois Schools [podcast episode](#) about one principal's experience utilizing the results to take an honest look at his school's climate and culture.

Please remember that participation in the survey is voluntary. Neither school nor district personnel should require survey participation or proof of survey completion. Doing so is a violation of the [Survey Ethical Code of Conduct](#).

Please reach out to [5essentials@isbe.net](mailto:5essentials@isbe.net) if you have any additional questions.

## IN BRIEF



Be a coffee bean webinar with Damon West. March 4 from 4 - 5 p.m.

### **Educator Opportunities**

#### **Be the Coffee Bean LEAD Webinar**

Join the Illinois Principals Association at **4 p.m. March 4** for an [inspiring webinar](#) featuring Damon West, renowned author of the transformative book, "The Coffee Bean." In this session, Damon will share powerful insights on how to overcome adversity, cultivate resilience, and embrace a positive mindset, drawing from his own remarkable journey from incarceration to empowerment. Discover the profound lessons of "The Coffee Bean" and learn practical strategies for turning life's challenges into opportunities for growth and success. Don't miss this opportunity to be inspired and motivated to become the best version of yourself.

#### **Computer Science PD Week**

Illinois students deserve equitable access to high-quality computer science (CS)

Illinois students deserve equitable access to high-quality computer science (CS) learning. CS PD Week is your ticket to bringing the power of computer science to your district or classroom.

During CS PD Week, new and experienced CS educators from around the state will engage with current CS curriculum, network and connect with peers, and discover research-backed strategies for making CS learning engaging at all grade levels.

Over the course of five days, participants also will learn about relevant topics, including computational thinking, cybersecurity, AI, and coding, from K-12 CS experts as well as build community during group meals and team-building activities.

**Location:** Liberty Leadership Middle School, Peoria

**Dates:** July 8-12

**Registration:** [www.ltcillinois.org/cspdweek](http://www.ltcillinois.org/cspdweek)

Limited scholarship funding is available via generous support from Code.org and Google to cover the registration fee. Scholarship funds will be prioritized to teachers serving students from underrepresented groups. Scholarship recipients will be notified no later than May 1.



Unpacking the Accelerated Placement Act. Policies and processes to provide equitable opportunities for advanced learners. Graphic of this leadership event.

### Unpacking the Accelerated Placement Act

Join the Illinois Association for Gifted Children from **8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. May 3** for an in-depth discussion and workshop with regional, district, and school leaders across the state to examine updated Illinois education policies regarding gifted programs, accelerated placement, and the application of best practices in advanced learner instruction.


- Explore **key aspects** of the Accelerated Placement Act.
- **Clarify language and needs** pertaining to gifted, accelerated, twice-exceptional, and advanced learner students.
- Develop **communication tools** to share with parents and community members regarding your district's Accelerated Placement process.

- members regarding your district's Accelerated Placement process.
- Discover **resources for identification, enrichment, and talent development** to expand academic pathways for more students.
  - **Network** with district and regional education leaders across the state with **similar demographics, needs, and goals**.
  - Walk away with a **Model for Promising Practices** that both **complies** with current law and **creates** equitable advanced learning opportunities.

For more information and to register, visit the [IAGC Spring 2024 Leadership Summit webpage](#). Registration closes **April 26**. Participants will receive five PD hours.

### 2024 NLGA Lt. Governors' STEM Scholarship Program

Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton invites Illinois schools (preK – 12th grade public or registered private schools) to apply for the third annual National Lieutenant Governors Association (NLGA) Lt. Governors' STEM Scholarship Program. NLGA will award up to \$1,000 to 12 schools in 12 states and territories to support STEM-related programming, projects, equipment, curriculum, and other endeavors. [Applications for the scholarships](#) should be submitted by a teacher or project supervisor for STEM-related expenses by **March 15**.

 Student Leadership/Service Learning Program for Grades 6-12. Image of a laptop computer

### Student Opportunities


#### Student Leadership/Service Learning Program

[Explore.Act.Tell.](#) is a free student leadership/service learning program for Grades 6-12 that teaches students to understand and act on solutions to hunger insecurity in their community. Standards alignment guides can be found at [ExploreActTell.org](#). In four interactive lessons, students will practice skills needed to become good citizens and advocate for community involvement and service, while developing leadership skills. They will have the opportunity to submit projects into a competition for a chance to win one of 30 grants for hunger-focused charities and may use the experience to fulfill community service requirements. This program, funded by Albertsons (Jewel-Osco), is free.

Register at [ExploreActTell.org](https://ExploreActTell.org) for instant access to program materials or contact Beverly Johnston at [Beverly@ExploreActTell.org](mailto:Beverly@ExploreActTell.org) for more information.

 Join our team. A group of people in line.

### Featured ISBE Career Opportunities

- [Supervisor #1541](#)
  - [CTE Specialist \(Principal Consultant #1694\)](#)
  - [Federal Fund Administrator \(Principal Consultant #1729\)](#)
-  <http://www.isbe.net/>. ISBE logo.



The Illinois State Board of Education is the State Education Agency for Illinois. Our mission is to provide each and every child with safe and healthy learning conditions, great educators, and equitable opportunities by practicing data-informed stewardship of resources and policy development, all done in partnership with educators, families, and stakeholders.

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