News 4 You

Keeping ROE 40 Districts and Staff Informed

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Upcoming ROE 40 Professional Development

Director of School Improvement
Ryan Wamser, rwamser@roe40.com

ROE 40 has a variety of upcoming opportunities designed for teachers, administrators, support staff, school improvement teams, business staff, and mental health professionals.

For more detailed information and to register: https://www.roe40.com/prof-development-meetings.html

Coming up:

📐 **Oct. 14:** *Teaching Math in the Age of AI* | Zoom | 3:30–4:30 p.m.

📚 **Oct. 20:** *Bookkeeper Roundtable* | Jerseyville ROE | 9:00–11:30 a.m.

📊 **Oct. 20:** *The Bigger Picture: Data Analysis for Real Impact* | Jerseyville ROE | 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

🧠 **Oct. 20:** *411 on Mental Health Screening & SEL* | Virtual | 11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

🌟 **Oct. 21:** *Renewed Purpose, Real Impact* | Jerseyville ROE | 12:00–3:00 p.m.

🤖 **Oct. 22:** *AI Tools Extravaganza* | Jerseyville ROE | 9:00 a.m.–2:45 p.m.

💚 **Oct. 22:** *Mental Health First Responders Network* | Zoom | 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

🏫 **Oct. 29:** *School Anxiety, Avoidance, and Refusal* | Jerseyville ROE | 12:30–3:00 p.m.

🎯 **Nov. 5:** *AA 4310: The Next Chapter* | Virtual | 9:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

💁 **Nov. 6:** *Increasing Student Engagement in the K-8 Classroom* | Jerseyville ROE | 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

📝 **Nov. 9:** *AA 1801: Gathering Evidence During Observations and Conferencing Using the Danielson Model* | Jerseyville CUSD 100 District Office | 9:00 a.m. –3:30 p.m.

🧩 **Nov. 12:** *A Framework to Support Executive Functioning Skills for Students with Learning Disabilities* | Carlinville ROE | 12:30–3:00 p.m.

ILLINOIS STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

ISBE'S WEEKLY MESSAGE

From Illinois State Superintendent Dr. Tony Sanders

HELPFUL INFORMATION: To access the links in ISBE News, hover over the link, press CTRL and click the link.

Dates and Deadlines

Oct. 1: Nominations due for Those Who Excel & Teacher of the Year awards

Oct. 1: Deadline to submit fiscal year 2027 National Board Component Subsidy applications

Oct. 2 | 5 p.m.: Deadline to submit 2026-27 United States Senate Youth Program applications

Oct. 5 | 1-4 p.m.: FY 2028 ISBE budget hearing (virtual)

Oct. 6 | 10-11:30 a.m.: 2026 Report Card Overview webinar

Oct. 7 | 2-3 p.m.: Sun Meals To-Go 101 webinar

Oct. 9: Deadline to submit National Board Certified Teachers Intent to Mentor applications

Oct. 12: ISBE offices closed for Columbus Day and Indigenous Peoples' Day

Oct. 14 | 10:30 a.m.: ISBE Board Meeting (St. Charles)

Oct. 21 | 4-7 p.m.: FY 2028 ISBE budget hearing (Springfield)

10/21/2026: Professional Review Panel

10/23/2026 | 2-3 p.m.: Sun Meals To-Go 101 webinar

10/26/2026: School Health Advisory Committee

Educator Effectiveness

Apply for National Board Certification Financial Support by Oct. 1

ISBE is accepting applications for fiscal year 2027 National Board Component Subsidies until Oct. 1. Eligible Illinois educators pursuing or maintaining National Board

Certification through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) may receive financial support through the component subsidy to help cover certification costs. Funding is awarded on a first-come, first-served basis and is subject to availability. Please share this information with teachers and school counselors who may be interested in pursuing National Board Certification. Visit the ISBE National Board Component Subsidies webpage for more information. Contact NationalBoard@isbe.net with questions.

ISBE Accepting National Board Intent to Mentor Applications

ISBE is accepting Intent to Mentor applications from National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) interested in supporting candidates through mentoring and cohort facilitation during the 2026-27 school year. Compensation may be available for eligible NBCTs who provide mentoring and professional development. Mentoring provides NBCTs with the opportunity to share their expertise, support candidates throughout the certification process, and help strengthen educator excellence across Illinois. Eligibility requirements and application materials are available on the ISBE National Board Certified Teachers webpage under the Educators Who Hold a National Board Status section. Applications are due Oct. 9. Contact NationalBoard@isbe.net with questions.

Nutrition

Meet the 2026 ISBE School Nutrition Champion

ISBE is excited to announce Rachelle "Shelly" Wuellner, director of food service for Bunker Hill Community Unit School District 8, as the 2026 ISBE School Nutrition Champion. Wuellner is a vocal proponent of farm to school, actively encouraging districts to utilize local meat and produce to support Illinois farmers and provide healthy meals for students. She is known for her open-door policy. Regardless of what time a student arrives at school, she ensures they are well-fed and cared for before they head to class, removing hunger as a barrier to punctuality and performance. Learn more about Wuellner on the ISBE School Nutrition and Wellness Champions webpage.

Wellness & Student Care

New Undesignated Epinephrine Policy Submission Survey Available in IWAS

A new Undesignated Epinephrine Policy Submission Survey is available in IWAS for the 2026-27 school year to streamline reporting of undesignated epinephrine policies and inventory. Schools and districts that maintain a supply of undesignated epinephrine must use this survey annually to meet the reporting requirements outlined in Section 22-30 of the School Code. The survey includes all required reporting elements, including affirmation that an undesignated epinephrine policy is in place, the date of the most recent policy update, and the number of undesignated epinephrine delivery devices currently maintained by the school or district. Schools and districts are required to

report this information to ISBE upon adoption of the policy and whenever the policy is revised. All IWAS users must sign up for this system listing within IWAS.

Undesignated Medication Resources and Standing Orders Reminder

The administration of any undesignated medication must be reported to ISBE within three days. Schools are required to maintain undesignated opioid antagonist medication for use in opioid overdose emergencies under Section 22-30 of the School Code. Schools are authorized to maintain undesignated epinephrine to treat emergency allergic reactions or anaphylaxis, undesignated asthma medication to treat respiratory distress, and undesignated glucagon to treat emergency hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) in students with a known condition.

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) has issued statewide standing orders for undesignated asthma medication, epinephrine, and opioid antagonists; however, a statewide standing order for undesignated glucagon is not currently available. Standing orders for undesignated medications are valid for one year from the date they are signed. School nurses and administrators should monitor expiration dates to ensure ongoing compliance.

To obtain undesignated medications, school districts may participate in several programs.

- **RESCUE Illinois provides participating schools with access to stock albuterol, necessary equipment, and training at no cost.**
- **Schools may obtain the opioid antagonist naloxone (Narcan) through the IDPH website or their local health department.**
- **The EpiPen4Schools program provides qualifying Illinois schools with free EpiPens.**
- **Beginning Jan. 1, 2027, pursuant to Public Act 104-0762, Illinois schools will be eligible to participate in the Neffy in Schools Program, which offers free prescription epinephrine nasal spray for the treatment of anaphylaxis. Schools may review and complete the required application materials in advance; submissions open January 2027.**
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Dear Illinois Educators,

On behalf of Illinois DCFS and the Illinois State Board of Education, we want to thank you for the essential role you play in the lives of hundreds of thousands of children and families across Illinois. School personnel are among the most important mandated reporters in our state, and your partnership helps ensure that children who may be experiencing abuse or neglect come to our attention quickly and their families receive the support they need to keep them safe.

As the new school year begins, we want to update you on our efforts to improve and transform child welfare practice in Illinois through stronger engagement, prevention and early intervention: continued implementation of the Safety Assessment Family Evaluation (SAFE) Model, the launch of our Forward Together initiative, and the introduction of our fully redesigned Mandated Reporter training.
We are extremely proud to share with you an important Department-wide shift to improve the quality and consistency of our decision-making and our effectiveness in engaging with families with the launch of our Forward Together initiative on July 1.

The Forward Together initiative includes implementing the Safety Assessment and Family Evaluation (SAFE) Model, which is an evidence-based, holistic and collaborative child protection decision making approach. The SAFE Model is a framework that helps guide how we assess safety and make decisions about next steps. It replaces an older tool that relied heavily on checklists and could lead to inconsistent decisions, and:

- Focuses on understanding what is happening within a family, not just what is reported.
- Helps staff identify immediate and potential safety concerns.
- Supports consistent, thoughtful decision-making.
- Centers both child safety and family strengths.

Now, when a hotline report meets criteria to be assigned to a DCFS child protection specialist, that specialist will begin by meeting with the family and conducting a Family Functioning Assessment within 14 days. The Family Functioning Assessment is a comprehensive, holistic information-gathering and family assessment process that allows child protection specialists to assess child safety, understand family circumstances more fully, and determine whether the situation requires a formal investigation or another child protection response, such as linkage to resources like housing assistance, medical care or childcare.

The Family Functioning Assessment allows for stronger, more effective engagement with families, more comprehensive information gathering, and more accurate safety decisions while reducing unnecessary trauma for children and families and ensuring they are connected to the support they need.

This change is important because we know that when we effectively engage and support families early on, children and youth are safer and better off. We have also learned that many families who come to our attention may be experiencing significant stress and/or hardship and need support, and not all are situations of abuse or neglect. That is why DCFS has also created a new arm of the Department focusing on prevention services to support families before becoming involved in the child welfare system. This more holistic, family-focused approach means that some of the questions you will be asked when you make a report of suspected child abuse or neglect have changed. As a reminder, these new questions focus on five areas:

- Extent and surrounding circumstances of alleged child abuse and neglect: What is the abuse/neglect concern? Who did what to whom? Is the child currently safe/unsafe? Are there safety concerns if a DCFS worker goes to the family's home?
- Child functioning: Information about the child's health, behavior, emotions, development, strengths or developmental delays.
- Adult functioning: Caregiver strengths, health, behavior, cognitive functioning, substance abuse issues, domestic violence concerns or mental health concerns.
- Parenting and discipline practices: Caregiver parenting practices, discipline practices, parent/child relationship.
- Military: Caregiver's military involvement and branch of service.

Asking these more in-depth questions will help us learn much more about the family at the onset; allowing our DCFS Hotline staff and child protection specialists to make more informed decisions when screening intakes and visiting homes; and ultimately leading to stronger families and more timely permanency for our youth.
With the statewide implementation of the SAFE Model and the launch of Forward Together, there are several key pieces of information that are important for educators to know:

- Your role as a mandated reporter remains critical in keeping children safe. Your legal obligations as a mandated reporter will not change and if you have reasonable cause to believe that a child known to you may be abused or neglected, you must continue to make a report to the DCFS Hotline. In a non-emergency situation, visit our Online Reporting System at childabuse.illinois.gov. In an emergency, call the Illinois DCFS Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline at 1-800-25-ABUSE (800-252-2873). Calls and online reports may be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- DCFS will continue to respond when children may be unsafe. The Family Functioning Assessment will help our child protection specialists determine whether a formal investigation is warranted or whether a family needs supportive prevention or early intervention services. If the information gathered during the Family Functioning Assessment supports a formal investigation, that investigation will proceed according to DCFS protocol.
- School personnel remain essential partners in understanding a child's well-being. Observations related to behavior, attendance, disclosures and functioning continue to play a vital role in our assessment of safety. DCFS will continue to rely on you to play a critical role in identifying children and families in need of DCFS intervention and support.

To help you and other mandated reporters understand your vital role in protecting children, the Illinois Mandated Reporter Training has been fully redesigned to better reflect our DCFS mission: promoting the well-being of children, youth, and families by responding to reports of potential abuse and neglect and, when needed providing family-centered care and connection to resources. This new version goes

beyond recognizing and reporting suspected abuse and neglect. It equips learners with tools to understand when a family needs support, not a report.

What's new in the training?

- Guidance to help distinguish poverty from neglect.
- A focus on supporting families through early connections to services.
- Strategies for recognizing and addressing implicit bias.
- A trauma-informed approach to interacting with children and families.
- Clear, practical information about how and when to make a report.

Our goal is to ensure children and families receive the right response, at the right time, while maintaining strong partnerships with educators across Illinois. We cannot emphasize enough how much we value your partnership in ensuring Illinois children are safe and their families are supported.

Thank you for all you do to support the safety and welfare of young people in Illinois.

Heidi E. Mueller
Director
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services

Dr. Tony Sanders
State Superintendent of Education
Illinois State Board of Education

Illinois AI Challenge | Free for students and educators

The Illinois AI Challenge is a statewide competition for students in grades 6-12. Teams of up to four students, supported by an adult coach, identify a real-world problem and develop an AI-based solution. Students can participate through either a written proposal or a working technical build, and there are also tracks for educators.

There is no cost to participate, and at least $2,000 in prizes will be awarded to the winning teams.

- October 9 at 5 PM: Interest form deadline
- November 9: Team information due
- December 18: Final submissions due
- January 8: Winners announced

Interest form: https://forms.ltcillinois.org/f/27AIChallengeInfo
Details: https://www.ltcillinois.org/illinois-ai-challenge/

This could be a classroom project, club activity, or something a small group of interested students takes on with a teacher or other staff member. It is meant to give students a chance to explore AI by applying it to a real problem that matters to them or their community.

IETC 2026 | November 11-13 in Springfield

The Illinois Education & Technology Conference (IETC) returns to the BOS Center in Springfield this November. More than 700 educators from across Illinois attend each year, including teachers, administrators, instructional coaches, technology directors, library media specialists, and IT staff.

This year includes 150+ sessions and workshops, with topics such as:

- Artificial intelligence and its use in schools
- Classroom technology and instructional strategies
- Computer science and STEM
- Accessibility and assistive technology
- Leadership, coaching, and professional development
- Technology planning, funding, and digital equity
- Cybersecurity and data privacy
- Technology infrastructure, networks, and device management

There will also be keynotes, an exhibit hall with 70+ vendors, the Tech Leaders Summit, and several opportunities for attendees to connect with colleagues from around the state.

- **Registration:** https://forms.ltcillinois.org/f/ietc26
- **Details:** https://www.ltcillinois.org/ietc/

Please feel free to share either or both of these through your newsletters, listservs, superintendent communications, or other regular channels. We'd especially appreciate getting the AI Challenge in front of districts soon since the interest form closes October 9.

EVENT

Playlab Demo: Student AI Challenge Pitch

Oct 21, 2026OnlineFree

Try out and experience AI-powered web apps built by students that are grounded in curriculum (not just generic chatbots) and successfully get students creating (not just consuming). Educators will also learn how to use Playlab…

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE