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The Catholic Conference of Illinois has enjoyed some recent technology updates, so this first newsletter of the 2012-13 school year may be coming to you through our new web site and in a different format. There may be some kinks and delivery issues at first, but bear with me, and we will get them worked out. We have not yet uploaded LAP emails into the system, so this first distribution is going to principals only. I hope to get this directly to LAPs soon, but in the meantime, please share this with your school's LAP. I do hope this newsletter finds your school in full-swing of a productive new year.

The first thing I want to do is acknowledge Catholic schools in Illinois that were recognized as Blue Ribbon Schools by the federal Department of Education:

- *St. Athanasius School -- Evanston
- *St. Francis Xavier School -- Wilmette
- *St. John of the Cross -- Western Springs
- *St. Luke Parish School -- River Forest
- *St. Mary of the Woods -- Chicago
- *St. Patrick School -- Washington
- *Sts. Peter & Paul School -- Naperville
- *School of St. Mary -- Lake Forest

The Blue Ribbon Award is an important recognition of the hard work and dedication of administrators, teachers and students, so congratulations to all.

The second thing I will do is to remind you that with the beginning of the school year, it is vitally important to ensure your school has appointed a Legislative Action Person (LAP) for the year. Every Catholic school should have already received a letter from me formally requesting this appointment with a LAP Manual describing our advocacy system and the expectations for all. Your LAP may be the same person as appointed last year or someone new. You may appoint more than one LAP. The LAPs' primary responsibility will be disseminating this newsletter and any action alerts to your school and parish community. Many schools have success in appointing a serving board member as LAP, but whomever is chosen, please ask their commitment to the essential work of advocating for CCI's education agenda in service to your and all Catholic schools in Illinois.

Another encouraged LAP activity is the building of a relationship between school and local state representative and state senator. This is best done by inviting him or her into the school to observe the good work being done there.

LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The two-week November veto session is rapidly approaching. There is always the potential for issues

affecting Catholic schools to emerge, but I am not expecting much action at this time. I will, of course, monitor developments and keep you all informed as necessary.

Rather than restate the legislative outcomes of last spring, which I included in my May newsletter and a subsequent legislative report, I direct those interested to the legislative report posted on our web site: <http://www.ilcatholic.org/wp-content/uploads/LegislativeReport2012-Education.pdf>.

CCI's legislative agenda for Catholic schools in next year's General Assembly will be considered by our board in November, and when it is approved, I will outline our approach. I have no doubt the issues contained in our priority list will be familiar to you, and we will need your help to achieve any progress. Please be prepared to participate in advocacy for issues that affect Catholic schools.

ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

ISBE & State Recognition -- CCI continues to work with newly hired ISBE staff to schedule state recognition visits through the end of the 2012-13 school year. There are currently about 35 school visits scheduled for this year. We also ensured around 20 visits last year, prioritizing new schools applying for the first time, and we appeared to meet that need.

Furthermore, the agreed administrative rule revisions on state recognition went through the public comment period without problem. The biggest changes are (1) state recognition will no longer only be good for the current school year, but will extend to December 31 of the next school year, ensuring enough overlap that schools will not lose recognition in the beginning of the school year, (2) all deadlines (immunization, state registration, state recognition application and calendar) will be due November 15 of each school year and (3) the seven year visit cycle has been changed to "periodic" visits. CCI continues to meet with state officials through the Nonpublic School Advisory Committee, where we recently finalized the probe document and a checklist of appropriate documentation for state recognition visits, and we hope to accomplish long-range scheduling of state recognition visits in the near future.

Senate Bill 2850 was signed by Gov. Pat Quinn on July 5, 2012. The bill has an effective date of June 30, 2013 and repeals Section 18-8.05 (F)(2)(b) of the School Code, which allows the first and last day of student attendance to be less than 5 instructional hours. So, beginning with the 2013-14 school year, days of attendance by pupils, including the first and last day of pupil attendance, shall be counted only for sessions of not less than five clock hours of school. This is a change: I know many of our schools schedule abbreviated first and last days, but if they want to count those days as attendance days beginning next year, they will have to be at least five clock hours.

TDAP Vaccine -- Beginning this year, students entering 6th and 9th grades must show proof of the TDAP booster vaccine. This is a new requirement instituted by statutory and administrative rule change and clarified by a letter from the Department of Public Health.

IMPORTANT FORMS & DEADLINES

Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report -- This report is available on the IWAS system. Completed reports must be received by ISBE no later than November 15, 2012. Nonpublic schools that have registered with ISBE at least once in the past must submit their data online via IWAS. Nonpublic schools that have never registered must submit their data using paper form 87-01:

http://www.isbe.net/research/htmls/np_entity.htm. This report (and Immunization Data) must be submitted before the annual Application for Recognition and School Calendar can be submitted!

Nonpublic School Application for State Recognition and School Calendar -- This IWAS system is also scheduled to be opened on or about October 1, 2012 and be due November 15, 2012. As was the case last year, ISBE will include an affirmation checklist in the application that was typically part of the probe document. My office sent guidance to you on how to complete the checklist last year. If you need the guidance again, please let me know.

State Recognition: Snapshot of Important Dates

October 1 (ish)

Nonpublic Registration, Enrollment and Staff Report available on IWAS
Nonpublic School App. for State Recognition and School Calendar available on IWAS
Student Health Data -- Immunization system available on IWAS

November 15

Completed Health/Immunization Data Reports Due
Nonpublic Registrations, Enrollment and Staff Report & Nonpublic School Application for State Recognition and School Calendar Due

PHYSICAL, DENTAL AND VISION EXAMINATION REQUIREMENTS

Physical Exams: Please remember children must receive physical examinations prior to entering Illinois schools for the first time, prior to the date of entering kindergarten or first grade, prior to entering sixth grade, and prior to entering ninth grade. A list of the immunization requirements:

http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/immunization_requirements.pdf

Dental Exams: All Illinois children in kindergarten and Grades 2 and 6 are required to have an oral health examination. Each child is required to present proof of examination by a dentist prior to May 15 of the school year. The Proof of School Dental Examination form and the Dental Examination Waiver form are uniform for statewide use and are available on the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois State Board of Education websites. *

Every school shall report to the Illinois State Board of Education by June 30 the number of children with dental examinations completed and additional details regarding those examinations and the number of children receiving waivers for various reasons.

Vision Exams: All children enrolling in kindergarten and any student enrolling for the first time in an Illinois school are required to have an eye examination. The eye examination requirement does not apply to children enrolling in preschool. Before October 15 of the school year, each child to whom the eye examination requirement applies is required to present proof of an eye examination. The Eye Examination Report form, as designated and available on the Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois State Board of Education websites, are uniform for statewide use. *

Every school is required to report to the Illinois State Board of Education by June 30 the number of

children with eye examinations completed and the number of children receiving waivers for various reasons. The IWAS system for reporting is scheduled to open on or about October 1, 2011.

* The consequence for students failing to submit the dental exam (for grades 2 & 6) and eye exams is that schools may withhold report cards.

If you have any questions regarding these issues, please give me a call (217-528-9200) or send me an email (wichmann@ilcatholic.org). May God bless you in your work on behalf of Catholic education.