

April 14, 2008

DUE ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 12, 2008

Dear High School Counselor:

This letter serves as a reminder to you for the upcoming cycle concerning the delivery process for the State Scholar, the Merit Recognition Scholarship (MRS), and the Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship programs. When we refer to all three programs at the same time, they are known as the High School Scholarship Programs (HSSP).

The primary goal for this 2009-10 processing cycle is to again announce State Scholars before Thanksgiving. We realize how important these announcements can be to your college-bound students, and we want them to know as soon as possible if they have been selected.

SCHOOL-GENERATED ROSTERS DUE SEPTEMBER 12, 2008

For ISAC to achieve the goal of announcing State Scholars prior to the 2008 Thanksgiving holiday, students' academic information must be reported to ISAC as early as possible and adherence to a tight schedule is critical. Therefore, counselors are urged to create a sixth semester roster for your high school's students now or during the summer months, rather than waiting to respond to an ISAC-generated roster. Special care should be taken to ensure that **only sixth semester data** is submitted. Sixth semester is defined as the third semester prior to graduation.

School-generated rosters must be submitted to ISAC on or before September 12, 2008 in order for ISAC to log in the receipt of the rosters and to avoid sending an ISAC-generated roster. In September, ISAC-generated rosters will be sent to high schools that have not submitted school-generated rosters (sixth semester academic information) for their students by September 12, 2008. If you do not submit your sixth semester data during the summer, please plan to spend time during September completing the ISAC-generated roster. These rosters will be due back to ISAC in early October 2008.

REQUIRED DATA FOR SCHOOL-GENERATED ROSTERS

Sixth semester data is to be reported for only those students in the top 50% of the class. This means that, if a school ranks, rankings should be provided for the top 50% of students. If a school does not rank, **unweighted** grade point averages (GPAs) should be provided for the top 50% of students. In addition, all schools (both ranking and non-ranking) **must** provide **unweighted** GPAs for any student who is not in the top 50% of the class but has an Illinois Standard Test Score (ISTS) of 31 or greater (this data is used in the determination of Robert C. Byrd Honors Scholarship awards).

Note: Use unweighted grade point averages only. Weighted grade point averages cannot be accepted.

Please attach a cover letter to your school-generated roster that includes a contact name for questions, a signature of the submitting party, and the following information:

1. High school's six-digit ACT code;
2. Class size at the end of the sixth semester; and
3. Unweighted GPA scale (4.0, 5.0, or other)

The following information is required for each student and must appear on the roster in the following order (Note – all school-generated rosters should include items 1, 2 and 5, and *either* item 3 or 4):

1. Student name - last name, first name, middle initial (if available) **must list students alphabetically by last name**;
2. Student numeric identifier - Social Security Number (SSN) or date of birth (student ID number is acceptable if that's your only option);
3. Class rank for the top 50% of students at the end of their third semester prior to graduation (normally the sixth semester); or
4. Cumulative **unweighted** Grade Point Average (GPA) for the top 50% of students at the end of the third semester prior to graduation (normally the sixth semester).
5. A student's class rank is an essential element used in the formula for selection of Byrd Honors Scholars. Therefore, all schools must provide **unweighted** GPAs for each student with an Illinois Standard Test Score (ISTS) of 31 or greater when submitting sixth semester data to ISAC.

If a roster is submitted to ISAC with students categorized or reported in a format other than in alphabetical order by last name, the roster will be returned with a request to submit one in alphabetical order or to complete an ISAC-generated roster instead. This issue is extremely important for the purposes of accurate data entry and meeting the delivery schedule.

DISQUALIFICATION CODES

If you know a student is not eligible for an HSSP award, please make a notation to that effect on the school-generated roster. As a reminder, the codes and the corresponding reasons for disqualification are as follows:

- E - not a citizen or eligible non-citizen;
- F - not a resident of Illinois as of June 30, 2008 (provide updated address);
- H - not scheduled to graduate from high school by September 1, 2009;
- I - already in college or will graduate from high school prior to January 1, 2009; or
- O - deceased.

HSSP POTENTIAL STATE SCHOLAR ROSTERS WILL NOT BE GENERATED

A roster of potential awardees will not be sent in October 2008. Only finalists will be announced in late November 2008 for the 2009-10 academic year processing. The appeal process is available if a student has been excluded or was not a finalist and the high school feels the student should have been designated a State Scholar.

MAILING THE SCHOOL-GENERATED ROSTERS TO ISAC

Mail your cover letter and HSSP roster containing sixth semester academic data as soon as possible to:

D2A, School Services
Illinois Student Assistance Commission
1755 Lake Cook Road
Deerfield, IL 60015-5209

QUESTIONS? If you have questions concerning this letter or HSSP, or any of ISAC's gift assistance programs, please contact ISAC at **schoolservices@isac.org** or call a School Services Representative at 866.247.2172.

School Services Department
Illinois Student Assistance Commission