Message from State Superintendent Randy J. Dunn

Good afternoon.

It was wonderful to see many superintendent colleagues in Springfield this past Thursday and Friday for our ISBE Superintendents’ Conference. What I want to do today is follow up on some of the information I presented to you—much of it surrounding our plans for Katrina students. I hope this will also be helpful for those around the state who were not able to join us last week.

We have a webpage for the Conference that you can access from the ISBE home page. Simply click on “Supt. Conference” when you access the ISBE website. We will have session handouts accessible from that site as well.

As you know, we provided paper copies of our new Programs and Services Locator document, as well as the final copy of the Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education that was adopted by the State Board at its special meeting on August 31, to those in attendance at the Conference. In addition, we will be mailing a copy of each of these documents to every school district, charter school, and Regional Office of Education in the state. However, these are also available online: Strategic Plan—http://www.isbe.net/pdf/strategic_plan_2005.pdf and Service Locator—http://www.isbe.net/excel/locator.xls. I’ll be talking more about the Strategic Plan in future messages as well.

Now for some information on relocating students you may be receiving in Katrina’s aftermath. We have set up a web page for information to help Illinois schools as they enroll students displaced by Katrina: http://www.isbe.net/katrina/.

The Louisiana Department of Education has forwarded some procedures that will be of help to Illinois districts enrolling students from that state. Louisiana has an excellent and extensive student information system in place (including information on assessment and special education). Please access this information at http://www.isbe.net/katrina/louisiana_letter.pdf. You will note that the memorandum references the Louisiana Student Information Request Form that can be found at http://www.isbe.net/katrina/la_student_info_request_form.xls. If you have any questions on working through this information, Rich Dehart is our State Homeless Coordinator and he stands ready to assist.

We are planning to do some type of data collection through IWAS in an attempt to minimally understand how many students are presenting in which Illinois schools and at what grade levels. This could be particularly important if there is to be some immediate funding that arises for these students being schooled in Illinois. Please track this information locally as you enroll students in anticipation of this data collection on our part.

We are looking at the possibility of having the State Board enact an emergency rule to issue a temporary substitute teaching permit to individuals who hold a bachelor’s degree and who resided in...
Louisiana, Mississippi, or Alabama but were displaced—and to individuals from other states contiguous to the Gulf of Mexico whose displacement is demonstrably due to Hurricane Katrina. This would be done on the basis of some personal identification and a notarized written affirmation that a bachelor’s degree has been granted. As this issue gets fully vetted, we’ll keep you apprised of developments. More information will be forthcoming if this is effectuated.

For schools and districts which may want to put together some student and teacher resource/supply kits, I am working with the Council of Chief State School Officers to ensure these get directed to areas hit by Hurricane Katrina that are going to start “doing school.” For those interested, make sure to send the requested items as a “kit” so as not to create any logistical nightmares for those on the receiving end. The Student Supply Kit guidelines can be accessed at [http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/KatrinaStudentSupplyKit.doc](http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/KatrinaStudentSupplyKit.doc) and the Teacher Supply Kit is at [http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/KatrinaTeacherSupplyKit.doc](http://www.ccsso.org/content/pdfs/KatrinaTeacherSupplyKit.doc). PLEASE NOTE: We are still working on whether these kits should be shipped to our Springfield and Chicago ISBE offices for us to send on, or whether the CCSSO will have a central receiving point—as that information becomes clear I will pass that along as quickly as possible. Please do not ship these until we forward that information. Including the dollar as requested on the kit list will also be helpful. (If CCSSO is able to secure donated shipping, the dollar will be donated to a school construction fund, the American Red Cross, or other similar charity providing relief efforts.

As I mentioned at the Conference, monetary donations can be handled by a joint account that the Illinois Principals Association and the Illinois Association of School Administrators have had in place for this type of event. Checks can be made out to the Illinois Principals Foundation and should be noted “Hurricane Relief” or “Katrina” or something to that effect. A sub-account has been created to specifically track donations for Katrina and donations are tax deductible. For any funds received, I will be coordinating with my fellow chiefs in the affected states and then working with the IPA and IASA to make sure money goes where it is most needed and can be best used. Donations can also be targeted (e.g., for “Orleans Parish” or “Biloxi”) if so instructed.

If, as a local school system, you receive a large number of the Katrina students, it will probably be expedient to have a central intake point with access to all of the service available within your schools. Please let us at ISBE know when you encounter the situation of a mass influx of students (e.g., a large number of families moving into a public facility in your district) so we can assist in looking at whatever immediate resources may be available to help you in this endeavor. Again, Rich Dehart (rdehart@isbe.net or 217-782-2948) will be the point of contact for this notification.

On a closing note…I was superintendent of the Chester Public Schools during the Great Flood of 1993 (you can find Chester on the map by following the path of the Mississippi River approximately one hour south of St. Louis). That was bad, but of course it was nothing like this devastation—and I was not personally affected in terms of damage to property or anything. However, I did see what an event like this can do to people. River people are hardy folk. But this kind of shock and havoc changes the arc of peoples’ lives. I hope you will keep your thoughts and prayers with them.

Randy Dunn

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**Special Announcement**

**Flags at State buildings to be flown at half staff**

Governor Blagojevich has ordered flags at State buildings to be flown at half staff to honor Supreme Court Chief Justice Williams Rehnquist until sunset on Tuesday, September 13, and to honor the victims of hurricane Katrina until sunset on Tuesday, September 20.

Schools have the option to lower their flags to half staff for the above periods if they choose.
Legal

Guidance document online for new High School Graduation requirements

ISBE has developed a guidance document for implementation of the new High School Graduation Requirements. The guidance document is available on the Resources for Administrators page on the ISBE web site or directly at: http://www.isbe.net/news/pdf/grad_require.pdf.

External Assurance

New website tools available

There are more new tools available this year on line through ISBE’s External Assurance Website http://www.isbe.net/ea/default.htm.


New NCLB Title I Comparability form: https://sec1.isbe.net/iwas/asp/login.asp?js=true

Instructions for completing Title I Comparability form: http://www.isbe.net/ea/htm/FY06_title_I_comparability_instructions.rtf

Illinois Association of School Boards (documents available on a subscription basis only): http://www.iasb.com/


Kudos

Crystal Award of Excellence Winner

Congratulations to Edward Bates who is the recipient of the Crystal Star Award of Excellence in Dropout Recover, Intervention and Prevention. This award has been presented by the National Dropout Prevention Network. Bates is the Director of Attendance Services for Positive Alternative Student Services (PASS) with the Lake County Regional Office of Education. The primary focus of his work has been the prevention and elimination of truancy.

Bates meets the criteria expected of Crystal Star Award Recipients:
- Establishes a continuing process of evaluating goals and objectives to promote an organizational structure that allows each school to develop a learning environment which ensures quality education for all students.
- Promotes and implements professional development programs focuses on issues related to working with at-risk students.
- Works effectively to integrate technology into the curriculum and also to provide enrichment opportunities to students.
- Establishes career and technology programs that recognize your need specific skills to prepare them to measure up to the larger demands of today’s workplace
- Works effectively with all groups in the community to create a caring and supportive environment where youth can thrive and achieve
- Works to develop and implement mentoring programs and tutoring programs
- Works to develop and implement alternative learning environments for at-risk students.

Bates will travel to California to receive the award during the October National Dropout Prevention Network Conference.

There has been only one other Illinois winner of this award in the past. This was in 2002 when The Honorable Rosella Wamser, Regional Superintendent for St. Clair County was the recipient.

Funding and Disbursements

Deadline extended for school bus driver “S” endorsement

The Illinois Secretary of State (ISOS) has notified ISBE that the federal requirement for school bus drivers to obtain the new “S” endorsement on their commercial drivers license (CDL) has been extended from September 30, 2005 to September 30, 2006.
ISBE joins with ISOS to encourage all districts and companies to continue having their school bus drivers fulfill this requirement as soon as possible.

CDL holders requiring the new “S” endorsement may go to www.cyberdriveillinois.com to locate the nearest drivers’ license facility to add the ‘S’ endorsement to their driver’s license through September 30, 2005. Select “Departments”, choose “Driver Services”, click on “Find the Nearest Drivers License Facility”. CDL holders may go to any facility listed on the website EXCEPT in the Chicago and Vicinity Area. In that area of 28 facilities, they may ONLY go to Elk Grove Village, South Holland, West Chicago, Libertyville or Plano.

As of October 1, 2005, school bus drivers may obtain the “S” endorsement ONLY at CDL facilities. If you have questions about the “S” endorsement please contact the Illinois Secretary of State Safe Ride Section at 217-782-7674, Monday thru Friday from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

**Final FY 06 Title I allocations complete**

The final FY 06 Title I Allocations for all local education agencies (LEAs) are complete and can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/excel/TitleI_allocations06.xls

Funding is based upon LEA eligibility for the four statutory formulas—Basic, Concentration, Targeted and Education Finance Incentive Grants; and upon a variable hold harmless. These figures replace the earlier projected allocations. To access any increases in funds, an LEA must submit a Title I amendment to the Illinois State Board of Education prior to obligating or expending the additional funds. Information on final allocations for Titles IIA, IID, IV and V will be forthcoming.

**Nutrition**

*KidsFest just weeks away*

Have you made arrangements to attend the *KidsFest* event at St. Charles on October 14 or 15? It is free and loads of fun; including activities, healthy snacking and excitement. Visit http://www.kidsseatwell.org for further information including free field trips, parking and more!

**Professional Development**

**National dropout prevention network conference**

The seventeenth annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference will be held October 15 through 19, at the Santa Clara Marriott in Santa Clara, California. For more information regarding the conference please visit http://www.edualliance.org/2005/readytolearn/

**Data Analysis**

**SIS reporting deadline reminder**

The SIS reporting deadline is September 30 and coincides with the Fall Housing deadline. SIS will eventually replace Fall Housing and we will have to have data by the last school day in September to align with the mandated reporting deadline.

**Student Assessment**

**Illinois Alternate Assessment Training Workshops**

Fall workshops for educators administering the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) begin August 30. To view the workshop schedule and register for a session, go to http://iregister.measuredprogress.org Registration is available online through September 9, 2005.

For questions on the IAA, contact Marilyn Leveque at mleveque@isbe.net or 217-782-4823.

**NCLB**

**Electronic NCLB programs monitoring instrument available**

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) announces the launch of the Electronic NCLB Programs Monitoring Instrument through the IWAS system. In an effort to provide greater assistance to districts concerning NCLB audit/monitoring visits in FY06, the division of External Assurance has created a
resource that will allow districts to assess their own level of compliance with NCLB program requirements. The new resource includes links to the rules and regulations governing the NCLB programs.

The monitoring instrument identifies example documents available through the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) Website. Instructions for completing the instrument are on the External Assurance Website. Should you have questions regarding this new feature contact Paul Williams at 217-782-7970 or email to pwilliam@isbe.net.

Additionally, another new electronic resource is being launched for the annual NCLB Title I Comparability analysis. The new electronic form will take the worry out of many of the calculations and should save considerable time and effort normally required to determine comparability. The forms can be submitted electronically and are also available through the IWAS system. Instructions on completing and filing your comparability analysis are available on line at the External Assurance Web site or in the IWAS system. Direct your questions to Paul Williams at 217/782-7970 or email pwilliam@isbe.net.

Grant and Scholarship opportunities

Have you ever developed a dream list for your school’s food service, nutrition and health-related program and services? Start fresh this year, be optimistic and consider applying for grant funds and/or scholarships. This is an opportune time to think about grant writing. Share this information with anyone in your school or school district looking for grant funds related to nutrition, health, wellness and more!

- [http://www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org) — The Foundation Center
- [http://www.iahperd.org](http://www.iahperd.org) — Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, the IAPHERD Endowment Fund
- [http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/3food.htm](http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/3food.htm) — grants for individuals, food science, hospitality
- [http://www.isfsa.net](http://www.isfsa.net) — Illinois School Nutrition Association SMART BUDDY scholarship
- [http://www.schoolgrants.org/grant_opps.htm](http://www.schoolgrants.org/grant_opps.htm) — School Grants

Review your knowledge on writing grants with the Education Grants 101—Knowing Where to Begin material at [http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/where_to_begin.htm](http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/where_to_begin.htm)

External Vacancy List

Please visit [http://www.isbe.net/hr/pdf/VL05-21.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/hr/pdf/VL05-21.pdf) to view a list of vacancies at the Illinois State Board of Education. Please note that at the end of this list there is also a link to our ongoing vacancy list.

In the News

Weekly news clips