Message from State Superintendent Randy J. Dunn

Good afternoon.

Because I’ve been focusing my opening message for the past few weeks around hurricane relief issues, I want to circle back and talk briefly today about another event which holds a great deal of importance for the Agency—and we hope, over time, for the state as a whole.

At a special meeting on Wednesday, August 31, the State Board of Education did its final adoption of ISBE’s Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education. The Plan highlights specific efforts we will be making and action we will be taking, around the three goal areas of Enhancing Literacy, Improving Educator Quality for All Children and Expanding Data-Informed School Management and Support Practices.

Work under each of these goal areas will roll out in five phases over the next two-to-three years, with a new set of initiatives coming on-line every six months. Each of these initiatives is outlined in the Plan. Here at ISBE, we have already begun implementation of the Phase I Initiatives for each goal.

I know that many readers have already looked at our planning document on the ISBE homepage and many superintendents received a copy at our Annual Superintendents’ Conference earlier this month. In addition, we will be mailing a copy of the Strategic Plan to every local school district, charter school and institution of higher education in Illinois. I would ask you, in turn, to share the Plan with the constituency groups you typically meet with in your own communities.

I again want to thank the numerous people who, over the course of this summer, were either involved in one or more of the nine public forums we held around the state or otherwise submitted testimony during the planning process. We hope that you will find many of the ideas shared in those venues ultimately reflected in the final draft of the Strategic Plan.

The State Board has asked for quarterly progress updates and after those are shared with the Board, I will use the Weekly Message to keep you apprised of our progress over time as well. As you may be aware, the Board met for its September meeting this past week in Springfield. Board members reiterated once more their collective desire that this strategic plan do more than just sit on a shelf and gather dust. Toward that end, the Board intends to seek specific funding in our FY07 budget to more fully support Plan initiatives.

I have a good deal of traveling over the next couple of weeks. As always, I look forward to seeing many of you across the many parts of our beautiful state I’ll be visiting. Have a great week!

Randy Dunn
Special Announcements

Those Who Excel and Illinois Teacher of the Year

Nomination packets for the 2006-2007 Those Who Excel and Illinois Teacher of the Year program will be mailed out in January. The banquet will be held October 7, 2006 at the Holiday Inn Select in Decatur. Please contact Ann Muraro at 217-782-4648 if you have any questions.

Jacqueline Bolger, the 2005-2006 Illinois Teacher of the Year, is scheduling presentations. To schedule Mrs. Bolger to speak at an in-service or meeting please contact her at 815-871-5890.

New career and college planning services available

The Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) has announced two new career and college planning services offered free of charge to all high school principals, guidance counselors, information technology coordinators, students and families.

A visit to the ISAC website, http://www.collegezone.com, will enable students and their families a simpler way to explore careers, choose a college, apply for admission and find ways to finance their college education.

ISAC will also be providing a free Electronic Transcript Exchange which will allow students to electronically send their application and transcript to Illinois colleges.

Letters providing more in-depth information about both programs being mailed to schools. If you have questions please call Jim Miller, Transcript Liaison at ISAC at 800-290-7525.

11th Annual Prudential Spirit of Community Awards

Applications are available to the 11th annual Prudential Spirit of Community Award. These awards, presented nationwide by Prudential Financial, Inc., in partnership with the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP), honor outstanding community service by students in grades 5 through 12.


Principal Appreciation Day

Principal Appreciation Day will be celebrated on October 21, 2005. This state-endorsed occasion honors the work and commitment of principals, assistant principals and deans in school ls throughout Illinois. For more information please contact Perry Hill at perry@ilprincipals.org or 217/525-1383.

Burroughs Award nominations

The State Board of Education invites nominations for the 2006 Thomas Lay Burroughs Award for the State's Outstanding School Board President.

This award will be presented at the Illinois Association of School Boards/Illinois Association of School Administrators/Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASB/IASA/IASBO) Conference on Sunday, November 20.

Nomination information is available online at: http://www.isbe.net/pdf/burroughs_award.pdf.
Nominations should be submitted by the close of business on Friday, October 28, 2005 to Jean Ladage, FAX 217-785-3972 or email jladage@isbe.net. For more information, call Jean Ladage or Marsha Moffett at 217-557-6626.

Professional Development

Opportunities and challenges in educating refugee children conference

The Illinois State Board of Education in partnership with the Chicago Public Schools and the Illinois Department of Human Services is sponsoring the second annual Opportunities and Challenges in Educating Refugee Children Conference on October 17 and 18, 2005. This conference is appropriate for school administrators, English as a Second Language (ESL), bilingual and general education teachers and counselors who work with refugee children. Many of the issues addressed are also
relevant for teachers working with non-refugee English Language Learner (ELL) immigrant students.


For more information, please contact Sherry Johnson, Principal Consultant at sjohnson@isbe.net or at 312-814-3850.

**School Business and Support**

**Limitation of administrative costs worksheet**

Section 17-1.5 (Limitation of Administrative Costs) of the School Code requires school districts to limit the growth of “administrative” expenditures to a maximum of five percent from one fiscal year to the next. The provisions of Section 17-1.5 took effect July 1998.

The Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet must be completed and returned to the School Business and Support Services Division by November 15, 2005.

School districts with administrative expenditures per pupil in the 25th percentile or below (last quartile) that wish to waive the administrative cap via a school board resolution must:

1. Publish notice of a public hearing
2. Conduct a public hearing
3. Have an appropriate waiver resolution approved by the affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the members of the school board
4. File a copy of such resolution with the State Board of Education within 45 days of approval

The Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet, quartile rankings for all school districts and a sample waiver resolution for qualifying districts can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/sfms/AdminCaps/AdminCaps.htm


If you have any questions please contact Michelle Heninger by phone at 217-785-8779 or by e-mail at mheninge@isbe.net.

**NCLB**

**Illinois Accountability Workbook Changes**

The 2005 changes to the Illinois Accountability Workbook have been formally approved by the U. S. Department of Education. A letter was received from USDE on September 21, 2005. The State Board of Education has also formally adopted the subgroup size of 45.

Posted on the agency’s web site at http://www.isbe.net/nclb/htmls/accountability_workbook.htm are the approval letter, the final document and a power point explanation of the changes. Changes included both items formally approved (e.g., subgroup size of 45 including a 95 percent confidence interval) as well as clarifications (e.g., students with limited English proficiency who are in the U.S. for their first year will be counted on the state assessments for participation but not for performance). I suggest you read the document and familiarize yourself with the contents.

If you have suggestions for changes in the future, please email them to NCLB@isbe.net.

**Suggestions for parental notification**

ISBE has created several letters to district superintendents and some sample letters to use to ensure the “parents’ right to know” specific information. Another sample letter has been developed for districts’ use if or as they need to inform parents that particular teachers are not “highly qualified” for their assignments, as required by NCLB. That letter has been posted on the NCLB portion of ISBE’s web site at http://www.isbe.net/nclb.

**Supplemental Education Services Provider cost reports**

The Illinois State Board of Education has adopted rules requiring Supplemental Educational Services (SES) providers to report and establish their actual cost of services. Federal law limits the per-child amount an SES provider can charge to the lesser of: (a) the district’s per-child allocation under Part A of Title I; or (b) the actual cost of the services. The actual cost information should be used by districts when entering into contracts for the 2005-06 school
year and when providing information to parents about a provider's services.

Under the adopted rules, costs must be reported in the following categories:
1. direct program expenses;
2. occupancy expenses;
3. curriculum and training expenses; and
4. administrative and general expenses.

The information submitted by providers is available at:
The link entitled "SES Provider Log, District by District" allows you to find which providers have submitted the necessary financial information to ISBE for your school district. Please note that the providers listed under the "All Districts" tab can serve any school district required to offer SES. The district's per-pupil contract amount will be the lesser of (i) the total amount reported by the provider under Section II, 2005-06 Actual Cost Estimates; or (ii) the district's per-child allocation under Part A of Title I. Please refer to ISBE's SES Toolkit for a sample contract that addresses the actual cost reporting requirement

Direct questions about ISBE's SES cost reporting requirements to Gary Greene, ISBE External Assurance Division, at 217-782-7970 or ggreene@isbe.net.

Data Analysis

Student Information System

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Student Information System (SIS) is being developed, implemented and administered in strict adherence to the privacy and confidentiality requirements of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Illinois School Student Records Act (ISSRA). An article on FERPA follows this article.

Batch files containing individual student information are exchanged between school districts and ISBE through a secure portal, the Illinois Web Application Security System (IWAS). Online access to the ISBE SIS for student identifier assignment and student enrollment also utilizes IWAS. This secure communication mechanism utilizes the same technology as online banking institutions and online credit card institutions (128 bit encryption).

ISBE has also taken that security a step further by building tight security controls into the IWAS system. IWAS requires that potential users apply for an account with a user identifier and password to access the ISBE SIS. These users must be approved by their district superintendents in order to access the system.

The ISBE SIS database is housed in a secure area on a secure server behind the ISBE firewall. Access to this database by ISBE employees is restricted to the Database Administrator and backup staff members. Access by IBM staff is restricted to those who have specific roles in the project such as database monitoring or providing technical assistance to district users. The contract between ISBE and IBM requires IBM to adhere to the requirements of both FERPA and ISSRA.

ISBE is asking school districts to submit confidential student information without parental consent under the FERPA exemption for government audit and evaluation purposes. Individuals involved in the ISBE SIS project from ISBE and our contractor IBM are considered to be “educational officials with a legitimate educational interest.”

The ISBE SIS currently requires the following data elements to be submitted to ISBE for initial assignment of a student identifier, to build a new enrollment record, to indicate participation in certain Federal and State programs and to exit or withdraw a student from a current enrollment:

- **Demographic**
  - Legal Last Name
  - Legal First Name
  - Legal Middle Name
  - Date of Birth
  - Gender Code
  - Race/Ethnicity Code

- **Enrollment**
  - Identifying Code for the Home School
  - Identifying Code for the Serving Entity
  - Enrollment Date at the Serving Entity
  - Enrollment Type Code at the Serving Entity
  - Grade Level at the Serving Entity
  - School Year for the Serving Entity
  - Full Time Equivalency at the Serving Entity
Program Participation Indicators
- Supplemental Education Services
- Homeless
- Limited English Proficient
- IEP (Special Education)
- IEP Testing Accommodation
- 504 Testing Accommodation
- Career/Technical Education
- Migrant
- Free Reduced Lunch/Low Income
- Century21 Indicator

Exit/Withdrawal
- Exit/Withdrawal Date
- Exit/Withdrawal Status
- Exit/Withdrawal Type Code

In the near future ISBE also will require additional data elements to capture assessment information for each student. These data elements will be used to respond to the reporting and accountability requirements of “No Child Left Behind” and the Illinois Report Card.

In later phases of development, the ISBE SIS will be integrated with other programmatic student information systems in ISBE such as the Special Education Approval and Reimbursement System (SEARS) and the career and technical education student system (ISIS). This consolidated student information system will allow ISBE to meet the reporting requirements concerning students for all federal and state mandates, reduce the data burden on school districts by eliminating aggregate student reporting and serve as the source of aggregated student data for the proposed ISBE data warehouse.

As for the student identifier assignment process, the following data elements are used to search for student identifiers already in existence on the ISBE SIS database:

Primary Search
- Legal First Name
- Legal Last Name
- Date of Birth
- Gender Code

Secondary Search
- Legal Middle Name
- Race/Ethnicity Code
- Birth Place Name
- Native Language
- Mother’s Maiden Name

The primary search elements and the first two secondary search elements are required data elements. The remaining optional elements could be useful in finding matching records in larger school districts whose student populations are culturally and ethnically diverse. However, the decision to supply this information is ultimately the parent(s)’ choice.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (20 USC § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. The law applies to all schools that receive funds under an applicable program of the U.S. Department of Education.

FERPA gives parents certain rights with respect to their children’s education records. These rights transfer to the student when he or she reaches the age of 18 or attends a school beyond the high school level. Students to whom the rights have transferred are “eligible students.” The provisions of FERPA are as follows:

- Parents or eligible students have the right to inspect and review the student’s education records maintained by the school. Schools are not required to provide copies of records unless, for reasons such as great distance, it is impossible for parents or eligible students to review the records. Schools may charge a fee for copies.

- Parents or eligible students have the right to request that a school correct records that they believe to be inaccurate or misleading. If the school decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student then has the right to a formal hearing. After the hearing, if the school still decides not to amend the record, the parent or eligible student has the right to place a statement with the record setting forth his or her view about the contested information.

- Generally, schools must have written permission from the parent or eligible student in order to release any information from a student’s education record. However, FERPA allows schools to disclose those records, without consent, to the following parties or under the following conditions (34 CFR § 99.31):
  - school officials with a legitimate educational interest;
• other schools to which a student is transferring;
• specified officials for audit or evaluation purposes;
• appropriate parties in connection with financial aid to a student;
• organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of the school;
• accrediting organizations;
• to comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena;
• appropriate officials in cases of health and safety emergencies; and
• state and local authorities, within a juvenile justice system, pursuant to specific state law.

Schools may disclose, without consent, “directory” information, such as a student’s name, address, telephone number, date and place of birth, honors and awards and dates of attendance. However, schools must tell parents and eligible students about directory information and allow parents and eligible students a reasonable amount of time to request that the school not disclose directory information about them. Schools must notify parents and eligible students annually of their rights under FERPA. The actual means of notification (e.g., special letter, inclusion in a PTA bulletin, student handbook or newspaper article) is left to the discretion of each school.

Enrollment data on Katrina evacuees

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) continues to collect enrollment data via IWAS on the enrollment of hurricane-displaced students from each public school district and each nonpublic school. We ask that you continue to update such information as often as possible. Since there is a potential for these data to be used for such purposes as supplemental funds/resources we request that you provide the actual count of students. Please do not provide estimates.

ISBE has received inquiries regarding numbers of staff that have been displaced by Hurricane Katrina and hired by Illinois Schools. Please send information as to any such staff (including name, state of origin, date of birth, Social Security number and type of provisional certificate or permit) to Steve Scaife at ISBE at sscaine@isbe.net.

If you have questions about the data collection effort, please contact Dr. Connie Wise, Data Analysis and Progress Reporting at 217-782-3950.

Upcoming data submittal deadlines

- **Reduction in Force Survey (86-28)**
  - Mail Out: September 15
  - Due Date: October 31

- **Fall Housing/Enrollment Report (87-03)**
  - Opens: September 30
  - Due Date: October 31

- **Unfilled Positions Survey (87-07)**
  - Opens: October 1
  - Due Date: November 15

- **Non-Public Registration (87-01)**
  - Open: October 1
  - Due Date: October 31

- **Immunization Survey (70-01)**
  - Opens: October 15
  - Due Date: November 15

Nutrition

**National School Lunch Week**

**October 10 through 14, 2005**

Let school lunch be music to your student’s ears during October’s National School Lunch Week. The theme, *School Lunch: It’s Instrumental* provides a symphony of ideas to use to communicate the importance of school lunch. Just a click away, visit the School Nutrition Association’s website at [http://www.schoolnutrition.org/nslw/](http://www.schoolnutrition.org/nslw/) for activities, logos, brochures, toolkit, menus, sample proclamation and more to help you conduct a successful National School Lunch Week promotion.

Curriculum and Instruction

**Reading Improvement Block Grant Update**

The Reading Improvement Block Grant Update for September/October is available on the ISBE website as of Monday, September 26. Go to www.isbe.net/curriculum and click on “reading” for the latest news regarding this grant. Please remember the annual performance report due date for the Reading Improvement Block Grant is November 1, 2005. Direct any questions to Laurie Lee at 217-557-7323 or lelee@isbe.net.
Enhancing Education Through Technology

Title IID Enhancing Education Through Technology Formula grant allocations should be applied for as an amendment to the NCLB Consolidated Grant application. Title IID has legislated requirements of specific documentation being on file at the state agency before the grant can be approved.

Title IID is a part of the NCLB Consolidated Grant application because the legislation allows districts to transfer monies between specific formula grants (Title IID being one of those grants.)

To submit the application without the Title IID funding, please check the District Not Applying for this Grant box found under the District Information tab on the Title IID Enhancing Ed Formula section of the grant. The box can be unchecked later when submitting the amendment.

Please note, any districts that have submitted an original grant with Title IID information included and would like to have the application returned before it is reviewed, please contact Jamey Baiter at jbaiter@isbe.net.


The University of Illinois is currently conducting an evaluation for the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) of the implementation of the Illinois Learning Standards (ILS). The purpose of the study is to garner a better understanding of the progress of standards implementation across Illinois. Visit the Web site (http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/ils/) to peruse information about the current evaluation, reports from the previous ILS study and links to national resources and ISBE created resources (e.g., the performance descriptors).

Suggested Genocide Education links now available on ISBE web site

On August 5, 2005 Governor Blagojevich signed into law House Bill 312 which expanded genocide education in Illinois. To aid teachers in the development of curricula, the State Board of Education has recently added to its web site a suggested list of links to websites containing information on the subject of Genocide. This list can be accessed at the following website:
http://www.isbe.net/ils/social_science/resources.htm.

FY’05 final project report date extension

The FY03 – FY05 Title IID formula grant final report deadline has been extended to October 28, 2005. The report can be found online at http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/html/nclb_titleIID_tech.htm under the Formula Grant FY05 Heading. The report can be filled out online in either the Word Template OR the PDF format and mailed to ISBE. If you have any questions, please contact Jamey Baiter at 217/557-7323 or jbaiter@isbe.net.

External Assurance

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Supplemental Educational Services Per Pupil Expenditure Report is posted at http://www.isbe.net/nclb/pdfs/ses_amounts.pdf. This table lists the Title I allocation for each district, the most recent poverty-plus-foster children count and the per pupil expenditure rate based on those two numbers. The funds expended for Supplemental Educational Services (SES) offered through a set aside in a district’s Title I allocation must be the lesser of either this per pupil expenditure rate or the actual cost of SES received by each child.

Questions about the computation of this rate should be directed to Jacqui Hayes in the Funding and Disbursements Division 217-782-2499 while questions about the programmatic use of the rate should be directed to Gary Greene in External Assurance at 217-782-7970.

Grant and Scholarship opportunities

William T. Grant Foundation

In July of 2005, the William T. Grant Foundation issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to support intervention research to improve youth-serving organizations, such as schools and community-based organizations.

The focus is on improving social settings involving structures, processes and programs. Some examples of these settings include physical arrangements of organizational space, social norms regarding aggression in classrooms, the quality, content and structure of interactions between youth and adults in
youth programs and the availability of significant and meaningful roles for youth within schools and community-based organizations. To accomplish this, the Foundation will support intervention studies that aim to promote youth development by focusing on youth-serving organizations.

The RFP is available online at:
http://www.wtgrantfoundation.org/usr_doc/RFPforInterventionResearchtoImproveYouthServingOrgs.doc
Letters of Intent are due on October 17, 2005 with full proposals due February 16, 2005.

The Joyce Foundation

The Joyce Foundation supports efforts to ensure that all Midwest children receive an education that prepares them for lives as thoughtful and productive citizens. The Education Program works to close the achievement gap that separates low-income and minority children from their peers by expanding their access to educational opportunities in early childhood, improving the quality of teachers they encounter in school and exploring innovations. For more information, go to The Joyce Foundation web site at:
http://www.joycefdn.org/seekingagrant/seekingmain-fs.html
The deadline is December 12, 2005

Deadline approaching for U.S. Senate youth program

As part of the 44th Annual United States Senate Youth Program sponsored each year by the William Randolph Hearst Foundation two student winners representing Illinois will spend an “all-expenses-paid” week-long educational experience in Washington, D.C. Each will also receive a $5,000 college scholarship. The deadline for receiving student applications is the close of business October 4, 2005. For immediate details, please call Dr. Richard Walker at 217-524-4832 or visit http://www.isbe.net/sos/htmls/hearst.htm

Legal

Guidance document for High School Graduation requirements

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) guidance document for the new high school graduation requirements is posted on the Administrators page on the ISBE web site accessible directly at:

Funding and Disbursements

Deadline extended for school bus driver “S” endorsement

The federal requirement for a school bus driver to obtain the new “S” endorsement on his or her commercial drivers license (CDL) has been extended to September 30, 2006.

CDL holders requiring the new “S” endorsement may go to http://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.

External Vacancy List

Please visit http://www.isbe/hr/pdf/VL05-24.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

Last week’s education news clips are posted at