Message from State Superintendent Randy J. Dunn

Good afternoon.

Given that the Illinois Principals Association (IPA) is in town this week for its 34th Annual Principals Professional Conference, it seems only right that I use my remarks today to make a few comments regarding the principalship. Indeed, as I write this, I am getting ready to head over to the Prairie Capital Convention Center to share some notions with the fine IPA group.

I plan to give some time to the following issue as I talk to the principals today:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) recently established its Commission on School Leader Preparation in Illinois Colleges and Universities. I am pleased to serve as a commissioner on that body, which is co-chaired by Dr. Dianne Ashby, Interim Vice President of University Advancement at Illinois State University and Cordelia Meyer, IBHE member and Executive Vice President of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club of Chicago. In part, the Commission is a response to a fairly scathing study of school leader preparation, entitled Educating School Leaders, recently done by Arthur Levine who just stepped down as President of Teachers College at Columbia University. Levine’s report can be accessed at http://www.edschools.org/reports_leaders.htm.

The Levine report examines the fashion by which educational administration programs operate and the types of organizational and environmental circumstances that shape the programs and their graduates. It rightly places a spotlight on school-level leadership given its criticality to student achievement and overall school success. The study forwards six somewhat-specific recommendations around the broader goals of 1) eliminating incentives that promote low quality programs (as Levine defines them), 2) setting and enforcing minimum standards of quality and 3) redesigning educational leadership programs.

But, now back to the Illinois picture: The IBHE Commission held its first meeting at ISU a couple of weeks ago. There are aspects of the Levine report that we certainly need to examine and apply to our landscape here in Illinois (e.g., probably too many programs, need for a tighter curriculum, inadequate clinical instruction). But in my comments to my fellow commissioners, the point I tried to raise—and that I will tell the IPA today—is that it may not be nearly as much that the “principalship” or its preparation needs fixing, as much as it is the environment and circumstances within which principals do their work that needs to be considered.

I’m sympathetic to some of the issues raised by Levine and think they merit discussion in our state. But principals in many Illinois school districts work in macro- and micro-political environments where they truly control very few levers of change and operate within a narrow bandwidth related to school improvement and organizational development. Until we address those factors as well, every principal in this state can hold a certificate from England’s National College for School Leadership (which Levine touts as a “promising model”
for reform in the preparation of school leaders—and NCSL doesn’t award degrees) and we will still miss the mark for really supporting principals as school leaders and not just managers.

It will be notable to watch the proceedings as the principalship comes back onto the school reform docket. A couple of other studies you may want to look at as you follow some of the current thinking: Preparing a New Breed of Principals: It’s Time for Action, by the Southern Regional Education Board; Better Leaders for America’s Schools: A Manifesto by the Thomas Fordham Institute; and Improving Teaching and Learning by Improving School Leadership by the National Governor’s Association Center for Best Practices. We’ll see where we go.

A final note: A big CONGRATS to all of our White Sox readers (both the long-standing ones and those who have come later to the cheering throng). As for tonight—well—those of us closer to Cardinal territory will hope the Redbirds can become only the third National League team to overcome this 3 – 1 deficit they’re facing. We’ll hope to stay alive for another day. If they do—it could be a fun series. No wagering allowed, of course.

Have a great week.

Randy Dunn

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**Accountability**

**Teacher evaluation plans**

School districts that have recently made any substantive change to their teacher evaluation plan must submit revised plans to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for review and comment. At the same time, school districts should submit a copy of the revised plan to the district’s exclusive bargaining unit representatives (Section 50.20 of the 23 Illinois Administrative Code).

These revisions should be sent to ISBE at: **Lynne Robinson**, Accountability Division Illinois State Board of Education 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777 Phone 217-782-2948

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**Funding and Disbursements**

**FY 2006 state and federal expenditure reports and claims due**

Please go to [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/expend_reports_due.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/expend_reports_due.pdf) to access information on all FY 2006 State and Federal Expenditure Reports and Claims that are required to be transmitted to the Illinois State Board of Education, Division of Funding and Disbursement Services.

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**Data Analysis**

**2005 report cards must be made public by October 31**

Districts must make School Report Cards available to the public prior to October 31, 2005. All other related documents are provided for the convenience of districts to be used as they deem appropriate.

To ensure that districts have adequate time to report to their communities, the public report card site will not be available until after October 31, 2005.

Prior to disseminating to the public, please complete the page regarding Planned Improvement for the School and District for each school. The contents of these pages do not need to be submitted to the Illinois State Board of Education. All documents at the site may be printed.
and also saved on you’re the school and/or district’s disks.

The School Report Card data has been made available to members of the media on an embargoed basis. The media embargo will lift on Wednesday, November 9, 2005. School districts are NOT subject to this embargo. **Districts must make School Report Cards available to the public prior to October 31, 2005.**

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact ISBE’s Call Center at 217-558-3600.

### Special Education

**Request for Proposals: State personnel development grant, regional professional development centers**

The U.S. Department of Education recently awarded the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) a five-year State Personnel Development (SPD) Grant under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. ISBE is pleased to announce that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the SPD Grant Project’s Regional Professional Development Centers is now available on the ISBE website at: [http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/spd_grant_project.htm](http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/spd_grant_project.htm).

Please note that the web site will serve as the mechanism for disseminating this RFP to eligible applicants. The entire RFP, including all appendices and attachments, can be downloaded and printed from the website address above. A limited number of hard copies of the RFP will be available upon request. Please direct such requests, as well as questions about the RFP to *Kathryn Cox*, Special Education Services Division, Springfield, at 217-782-5589 (voice) or 217-782-1900 (TTY).

**Special education summer claims due November 1**

Special Education Summer School and Special Education Summer Individual Orphanage claims are statutorily required to be received at the Illinois State Board of Education on or before November 1, 2005. Claims are for eligible students educated in 2005 summer programs and must be filed electronically. No claims will be accepted or honored after the statutory date.

Special Education Summer School State Aid claims authorized under Section 18-4.3 are required to be filed electronically via the Illinois State Board of Education’s Web Application Security System (IWAS) and will only be available to transmit student data until midnight November 1, 2005.

Eligibility requirements for pupils claimed for summer school are:

1. the pupil must be enrolled in one or more courses offered for at least 60 clock hours in the summer session;
2. the pupil must be eligible pursuant to the requirements for continued summer school services per his or her Individual Education Plan (IEP);
3. there shall not be a tuition charge to families to insure a "free, appropriate public education."

Questions regarding completion of the Special Education Summer School claim should be directed to *Beth Roughley*, Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256 or via email at broughle@isbe.net.

Special Education Summer Individual Orphanage claims authorized under Section 14-7.03 must be transmitted electronically using EDWin (or NetCheck) via Harrisburg Project. Technical issues regarding EDWin or NetCheck should be directed to Harrisburg Project support staff at 1-800-635-5274. Special Education Summer Individual Orphanage claims may only be transmitted until midnight November 1, 2005. Questions regarding completion of this claim should be directed to *Jodi Whitlow*, Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256 or via email at jwhitlow@isbe.net.

Please direct technical questions regarding IWAS to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Call Center at 217-558-3600 Monday through Friday, from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### Student Assessment

**IAA trainings**

The second round of IAA trainings for teachers completing a portfolio will be held statewide November 1 through 18. The follow-up trainings offer teachers a chance to receive feedback by bringing student work they are compiling for one portfolio for the
2005-06 assessment year. Two types of training sessions will be provided:

Morning sessions (8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) are intended for teachers who are new to the IAA process this year and attended the first training at the beginning of the school year. Afternoon sessions (1:30 to 3:30 p.m.) will be for returning teachers.

The on-line registration site address is: http://iregister.measuredprogress.org. Registration is available online through 25.

**Curriculum**

**Illinois Work Zone Safety Calendar Contest**

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) is looking for young artists with a vision for safety. Children kindergarten through sixth grade are invited to participate in the first ever Illinois Work Zone Safety Calendar Contest.

Working with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), the American Traffic Safety Services Foundation (ATSSF) and the Illinois Chapter of the American Traffic Safety Services Association (ATSSA), schools across Illinois are holding a drawing contest and sending the finalists to IDOT for the chance to win savings bonds, trophies and the opportunity to be featured in the 2006-2007 Illinois Work Zone Safety Calendar.

The top sixteen winners will be invited to an awards luncheon in February where they will receive their prizes. The top six Illinois works of art will advance to judging at the national level and vie for a spot in ATSSA’s work zone safety calendar.

For more information go to: http://www.dot.il.gov/trafficsafety/WZS/WZScontest.html. If you have questions please contact IDOT staff Jessica Baker at 217-782-6953 or Debbie Nehrke at 312-793-6050.

**Reading improvement block grant update**

The Reading Improvement Block Grant Update for September/October is available on the ISBE website. Go to www.isbe.net/curriculum and click on “reading” for the latest news regarding this grant.

You may also access the annual performance report form at this link. The form must be submitted by mail with data used to establish student progress. Please remember the annual performance report due date for the Reading Improvement Block Grant is November 1, 2005.

The first disbursement of Reading Improvement Block Grant funds will take place the end of October. An approved application (completed on the eGMS accessed through IWAS) as well as a performance report complete with data from the 03-04 school year demonstrating performance progress, must be in the ISBE office before money is disbursed. Direct any questions to Laurie Lee at 217-557-7323 or lleee@isbe.net.

**An Adventure of the American Mind**

U.S. Senator Dick Durbin recently announced that a House-Senate conference committee has approved $2 million for continuation of teacher training initiatives in Illinois. *An Adventure of the American Mind* is a teacher training initiative that instructs educators in ways to incorporate the Library’s digital collections into school curricula.

The focus of *An Adventure of the American Mind* nationally is to raise the comfort level of in-service and pre-service classroom teachers, faculty such as librarians, media specialists and educational support personnel and college faculty to access, use and produce curriculum using the Internet and digitized primary source materials.

Currently ten Illinois partners are actively sharing information with Illinois educators and students. They are Southern Illinois University (Carbondale and Edwardsville); Loyola University-Chicago; DePaul University, Chicago; Governors State University, Kankakee; Federation of Independent Illinois Colleges and Universities, Springfield; Barat Education Foundation, Lake Forest; Eastern Illinois University, Charleston; Illinois State University, Normal; and Quincy University, Quincy. These institutions are providing professional development.
through in-school, campus based and on-line workshop series, stand alone workshops, presentations at local, state and national conferences, collaborative projects, graduate courses and continuing education course work. The educational approach of each institution varies with the need of the area they serve. Additional information regarding programs may be found at individual partner websites.

The AAM Illinois program is available at no cost to Illinois educators, pre-service teachers, students and school personnel. There are numerous reasons to participate in this curriculum enhancement program. As an AAM Illinois participant, participants will be part of a national program that will help them and colleagues learn to access and use Library of Congress online materials and other digital primary sources. Educators may become influential mentors in their schools and help others learn to best access, use and create digital media resources in the classroom. Some AAM Illinois partners offer Continuing Professional Development Units and/or Graduate Credits to attendees for workshop attendance and participation.

For more information about this program you may contact any of the partners listed above or Cindy Rich, An Adventure of the American Mind Program Director, Eastern Illinois University at 217-581-7857 or go to www.eiu.edu/~eiuaam to find an AAM partner in your area.

Professional Development

Save the date: Attracting and Retaining Quality Teachers

The Illinois Principals Association and other partners in the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative invite you to Attracting and Retaining Quality Teachers – Local and State-Wide Solutions, a working conference February 28 and March 1, 2006 at the Hilton Springfield.

Under the Federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, both experienced teachers and new teachers must be highly qualified. Beyond NCLB all schools need to attract and retain teachers who are dedicated to excellence in education.

The conference sponsors invite district or building teams for a working conference to design plans for recruiting and keeping teachers who are dedicated to promoting learning for all students. Presenters will include Richard Ingersoll, Jim Burgett and Mary Clement. Save the dates: http://intc.ed.uiuc.edu/conference

For more information, email intc@ed.uiuc.edu.

Kudos

ISBE seeks info on school activities benefiting hurricane victims

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) would like to recognize the activities of schools, students, faculty members and school groups who have held events or other activities to help victims of Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita.

Please submit a brief overview of your activities to Becky Watts at ISBE via email to rwatts@isbe.net. All groups submitting information will be recognized in future editions of the Weekly Message.

External Vacancy List

Please visit http://www.isbe.net/hr/pdf/positions.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 http://www.isbe.net/news/2005/newsclips/051014.htm