Message from State Superintendent Randy J. Dunn

Good afternoon.

This week of November 13 through 19 marks the 84th Annual American Education Week (AEW) celebrated in Illinois and across the country. This year’s theme is “A Strong America Starts with Great Public Schools”.

American Education Week presents us with an opportunity to celebrate—and maybe more importantly given the national climate now, to champion—the great undertaking of public school education. It is a wonderful time to honor individuals in your communities—educators, parents, civic leaders and others—who are making a difference in ensuring that every child receives a quality education.

The National Education Association has for many years coordinated the national recognition of AEW by suggesting that each day be set aside with a special observance:

- Monday, November 14: Nationwide Kick-Off Celebration
- Tuesday, November 15: Invite Parents to School Day
- Wednesday, November 16: Education Support Professionals Day
- Thursday, November 17: Teacher for a Day
- Friday, November 18: Substitute Educators Day

The NEA also offers an online toolkit available at [http://www.nea.org/aew/index.html](http://www.nea.org/aew/index.html) for those who would like additional information.

Finally, another fixture of AEW (at least for us in Illinois) is the Joint Annual Conference (“Triple-I”) that will be taking place in Chicago at the end of this week. As they did last year, members of the State Board of Education will be doing a meet-and-greet session for conference attendees in the Comiskey Room at the Hyatt. Hours will be from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on both Friday and Saturday afternoons. The Board always stands ready to hear both complaints and kudos! This comes on the heels of the State Board’s regular monthly meeting in Chicago on Wednesday and Thursday preceding the conference.

I hope to see many of you in Chicago—and have a great week!

Randy Dunn
Curriculum and Instruction

Reading recovery training
The application for FY 06 Reading Recovery Training Site Funds is being mailed to training sites this week. These funds are available to Reading Recovery Training Sites to offset the cost of professional development for teachers in this early reading intervention program. In order to assist Reading Recovery Coordinators in their preparation of the application, this year the application is also available in a writable format. The writeable version may be downloaded at http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/reading/reading.htm.

Request for proposal
ISBE announces the release of the new Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Request for Proposal (RFP). The Enhancing Education Through Technology program is authorized through NCLB, Title II, Part D and approximately $9 million dollars will be awarded to eligible applicants this cycle. The RFP is available at EETF Title II Part D Grant.

Legal

Notice of completed rulemaking
Please be advised that a number of rulemaking items that form part of the comprehensive review of ISBE’s rules are now in effect. These generally involve the repeal of “dormant” sets of rules but also include two sets of amendments and one new Part. These latter items have been posted on the agency’s web site at http://www.isbe.net/rules; choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to the relevant Part number. (If you print only the affected Sections, remember to include the table of contents for the Part, which changes every time the Part is amended.) The effective date for all these actions is October 31, 2005.

Repealed Parts
- Staff Development Plans and Programs (Part 30)
- Insurance for Certificated Employees (Part 56)
- Professional Development Block Grant (Part 160)
- Scientific Literacy (Part 220)

Amended Parts
- Alternative Learning Opportunities Program (Part 240)
- School Technology Program (Part 575)
- Affected Sections: 575.10, 575.20, 575.30, 575.40, 575.50 and 575.60

New Part
- Replacement of Required Rules (Part 500)

Health warning about lead in soft vinyl lunch boxes
Due to a recent finding of lead content in some soft vinyl lunch boxes, public health officials have advised parents and other consumers to consider packing lunches in brown paper bags, reusable cloth bags or more traditional metal or hard plastic lunch boxes.

The presence of lead in lunch boxes came to light after recent findings by the California-based Center for Environmental Health. The Center commissioned testing which found harmful levels of lead in 17 soft vinyl lunch boxes. Lead is a highly toxic metal that can cause severe neurological damage, including learning and behavioral problems. Children, pregnant women and women who are breastfeeding are at highest risk for lead-related problems.

The Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) recently tested 13 vinyl lunch boxes at an Illinois Department of Public Health laboratory and found one—a Spider Man lunch box—to have significant levels of lead (4,100 parts per million) in the interior plastic lining and some lead dust in the interior of the box. The legal limit for lead in paint in children’s products is 600 parts per million. While these findings show that the level of lead found in the Spider Man lunch box is not high enough to cause acute lead poisoning during normal use, lunch boxes...
with lead may add to an environmental health danger faced by everyone, especially children.

Health officials urged parents to consider using alternative containers to carry lunches. There is no simple and conclusive way to tell if a particular soft plastic lunch box contains lead and gaps in federal labeling regulations make it difficult to trace leaded lunch boxes back to a particular overseas manufacturer.

Parents should have all children aged six months to six years tested annually for lead. Most children in Chicago continue to be exposed to lead from deteriorating lead-based paint dust in older homes. Parents and landlords are urged to address lead-based paint hazards as the primary method to control lead poisoning. Lead levels are tested routinely by doctors with a simple blood test.

### Professional Development

**Genocide and Human Rights Summer Institute - June, 2006**

Northern Illinois University, Secondary Teacher Certification Program, the Department of History and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies, in response to the new mandate of Public Act 094-0478, establishing the requirement for a "unit of instruction studying acts of genocide across the globe," will be hosting a two-week institute that will introduce participants to the historical, legal, psychological, philosophical and literary dimensions of genocide. Significant attention will be paid to developing teaching methods and resources. The institute includes a four-day trip to Washington, D.C. during which the participating teachers will visit the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the National Museum of the American Indian, speak with various international and national government representatives and meet with staff members at several leading human rights and anti-genocide organizations. More information can be found at: [http://www.niu.edu/clasep/genocide/index.html](http://www.niu.edu/clasep/genocide/index.html). You may also contact Institute Director Dr. J.D. Bowers at jbowersi@niu.edu. Both CPDUs and graduate credit will be available.

**Master of Education or Advanced Certificate program available**

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Department of Educational Organization and Leadership is offering a new cohort-based program in Oak Brook beginning the summer 2006. Prospective students can pursue either the Master of Education or Advanced Certificate degree. The Oak Brook-based Educational Administration Program is designed to meet both the degree requirements of the College of Education and the certification requirements for the State of Illinois General Administrative Endorsement (Type 75). Admitted students will enter the cohort program together and continue through their course work as a group.

Applications for admission to the fall cohort must be submitted by March 1, 2006. An informational meeting is scheduled at the Multi-University Center in Oak Brook from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on November 30, 2005. For more information please visit: [http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eol/edadmin/home.html](http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eol/edadmin/home.html).

### Student Assessment

**Test Dates for 2006-2007 school year**

For the 2006–07 school year, the ISAT and IMAGE tests for grades 3 through 8 will be administered March 12–23, 2007. The dates of this two-week window will provide sufficient time to generate school and district score reports for posting online by June 1, 2007. A correction period will still be built into this process. Districts that need to modify these testing dates due to spring breaks will be provided information and guidelines at a later date.

The dates for the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) and for grade 11 IMAGE will be April 25–26, 2007, with makeup testing May 9–10, 2007.
School Hurricane Relief Efforts

We continue our recognition of the students, teachers, principals, parents and school staff members around the state have organized fundraisers, bake sales, walk-a-thons and many other events to raise funds to help the areas damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. We applaud the spirit of giving and compassion that Illinois schools have demonstrated!

We will continue to highlight schools each week until all submissions have appeared. To submit more great news of relief efforts, email Becky Watts at rwatts@isbe.net.

- Central Elementary School in Wilmette filled 200 backpacks with school supplies for Bayou Woods Elementary in Louisiana.
- Oak Lawn Community High School created Spartans Offer Support (SOS) Campaign with its "Beads for a Buck" effort where for every dollar staff and students donated, they received a strand of beads. Playing off a New Orleans theme, the beads were a visible sign of support around the building. Also a part of the campaign was "Koins for Katrina" in which faculty, staff and students were encouraged to throw their spare change into a bucket after purchasing their food in the cafeteria. A wintergreen lifesaver was given for every donation. The school raised over $4600.
- The Tri-Valley Middle School and High School Student Councils bought a used bus from the district, and then held a drive for bottled water. Working in conjunction with Building Better Communities of Louisiana, district employees drove the bus to Louisiana, turned over 6,000 gallons of bottled water and the bus to the local charity and returned home. This delivery was made Monday, September 5, just one week after Katrina hit the coast.
- The Kinnikinnick School District had a blast raising $18,815.02 in just one week and sending the money to the Red Cross. Activities included a loose change contest in each homeroom at the middle school. The middle school also hosted a theme day in which students were charged one dollar to wear a hat, pajama pants, sports jersey, crazy socks or their clothes backwards. A few middle school students went door to door collecting donations with one student raising $500. The grade school hosted a family movie night and showed Finding Nemo and sold popcorn and treats. The week ended with a community dance that included a disc jockey, raffle and concessions.
- During September, Fairmont School District #89 raised $270 along with two truckloads of non-perishable food, toiletries, water and baby products for the families impacted by Hurricane Katrina.
- Gurnee—Woodland Community Consolidated School District 50 students, staff and business community raised a total of $21,569 for the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The money was sent to the Red Cross. The money raised by the schools included: Primary School, $530.42; Elementary East, $734; Elementary West, $1276.38; Intermediate School, $2833.36; and Middle School, $15545.81. Money raised by local businesses included: C.E. Crowley, $150; Callans Financial, $100; Edward May M.D., $100; and Yan Razdolsky D.D.S., $300.
- Libertyville Elementary District 70 Schools collected more than $23,400, as well as almost a semi-truck trailer full of supplies, to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina which ravaged the Gulf of Mexico coastal region. Cash collections for “Coins for Katrina” are still being collected at Adler Park, Butterfield, Copeland Manor, Rockland and Highland Middle Schools, all located in Libertyville. Students brought in pocket change, worked lemonade stands and garage sales, held bake sales and car washes and sold red rubber band “Relive, Recover, Rebuild” bracelets and uniquely decorated flip flop shoes. Teachers also took on extra projects to help those in need. Using connections at the Lake County United Way and a semi-trailer truck from the Nelson Westerberg Moving Company, teachers collected almost a semi truck full of teaching supplies for a Baton Rouge school district taking in misplaced students.

Teachers, administrators and support staff also took to the streets of the village one afternoon to “can” for the Libertyville District 70 Hurricane Relief Fund. And, Highland Middle School teachers are holding the district’s first teacher-only variety show this weekend to contribute ticket costs to the fund.
“The fundraising is a social consciousness piece of our school community,” said Superintendent Dr. Mark R. Friedman. “We are aware of what’s happening in the real world and incorporate it to help educate our students. Our goal was to raise $20,000, which is more than the $10,000 we collected in a few weeks last school year to aid victims of the deadly Tsunami in Asia. To date we have raised $23,451.47. The people of this community are incredibly compassionate and caring.”

- In the weeks following Hurricane Katrina, Peoria’s Hollis School Student Council organized a collection of school supplies for those affected by the storm. Students in kindergarten through eighth grade participated in the collection. Together, we were able to create thirty elementary student kits. Additionally, we were able to pack four boxes with miscellaneous supplies. All together, we collected eleven shipping boxes of supplies. A few special helpers include the Newton Family who donated three dozen toothbrushes and Megan and Elizabeth Miller who collected money from neighbors and raised $32. The supplies were sent to our adopted city, Biloxi, Mississippi.

Federal Grants and Programs

Illinois e-Plans

ISBE and Northern Illinois University (NIU) are proud to announce the launch of Illinois e-Plans on November 9, 2005. The Illinois e-Plans toolkit significantly streamlines the process of submitting required plans to local boards and ISBE. Beginning November 9 the Illinois e-Plans toolkit will be available through the Interactive Illinois Report Card (IIRC) website for schools and districts. The toolkit includes a School Improvement Plan Template and an accompanying Guide and Peer Review Tool to assist districts and schools in revising and submitting school improvement and restructuring plans. A District Improvement Plan Template and an accompanying Guide will follow in the next few weeks.

The Illinois e-Plans School Improvement Template may be used by Illinois schools in school improvement status and academic watch status to incorporate the contents of a revised school plan as required by Public Law 107-110, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, 20 USC 6301 et seq., (NCLB) and Section 2-3.25d of the School Code, 105 ILCS 5/2-3.25d. The Template may also be used for schools that must submit a restructuring plan.

The use of the Template is not required. Schools and districts may continue to use a format that complies with the statutes cited above. To that end, schools and districts using other formats should attach Section I and Section II of the template to plans they submit to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

The template includes:
I. Board Approval and Assurances
II. Plan Development, Review and Implementation
III. Data and Analysis
IV. Action Plan
V. Restructuring Plan (if applicable)

The Template and this accompanying guide are to be used together to ensure that users include all requirements of state and federal law for revised school improvement plans and restructuring plans.

The Illinois e-Plans system is designed to be user friendly and a welcome addition to Illinois’ system of support to schools and districts. Districts and schools will have multiple years (including 2005) of School Report Card data and information at their fingertips automatically populating the screens at the IIRC web site.

District superintendents will need a password to use Illinois e-Plans. These passwords are available by calling Gail Buoy, Federal Grants and Programs, 217-524-4832. NIU will email passwords by November 18 to district superintendents.

ISBE employment opportunities

External vacancy list

An External Vacancy List (#05-29) can be accessed through the following link:
http://www.isbe.net/hr/pdf/VL05-29.pdf

In the News

Weekly news clips

Last week’s education news clips are posted at http://www.isbe.net/news/2005/newsclips/051110.htm