Good afternoon.

It was great to see many of you in Chicago this past weekend, renewing old friendships and making new acquaintances. I mentioned to a first-time attendee I had met that Triple-I is the closest thing we have to a big family reunion in Illinois PK-12 Education—in part, this is what makes the conference such a success each year.

My last official duty yesterday, along with State Board of Education Chair Jesse Ruiz, was to present ISBE’s Thomas Lay Burroughs Award at the final general session. The Burroughs Award annually honors the outstanding local board of education president in Illinois; this year’s winner is Barbara Somogyi, President at District 59 in Arlington Heights. Through her long service to the Illinois Association of School Boards, Barbara has provided leadership for many years not just in her home district, but to the state as well. Congratulations, Barbara!

And I would be remiss if I did not use this forum to also congratulate Dr. Brent Clark on his selection as Executive Director-Elect of the Illinois Association of School Administrators. I will look a little forward to not being the newest kid on the block in a few months…

Let me share a few additional comments regarding Secretary Spellings’ announcement last week, allowing a pilot program of up to ten states to use growth models to measure the progress of student achievement for accountability under NCLB.

We are awaiting transmission of some additional information to us from the U.S. Department of Education regarding this initiative, but have looked carefully at what they’ve released to this point. Here at ISBE, we already have a team pulled together to analyze the requirements of the pilot to determine if we can put forward a proposal.

As you would guess from my own comments around the state on this topic, I applaud this move on the part of Secretary Spellings and we will look at every opportunity by which we could take advantage of this flexibility. Our biggest concerns right now center around the feds’ explicit requirement that a state have assessments for Grades 3 through 8 “operational for more than one year.” Additionally, this “new path” (as it’s been called in the Department’s materials) makes demands on data capabilities that we also have to carefully consider.

But please rest assured that we will fully vet these and other issues both internally and externally to see whether and how we can respond as a state. As many of you are also aware, Becky McCabe, Division Administrator in Student Assessment, has already put together a task force on this whose work is going to take on even greater urgency.

Of course, more will be shared over the coming weeks as this all becomes clearer.

Please accept my good thoughts and best wishes for a happy, safe, and restful Thanksgiving. Have a great week!

Randy Dunn
**State Board News**

**Illinois State Board Of Education**

The State Board of Education has revised its 2006 meeting schedule. The tentative dates and times for the Board’s 2006 meetings are as follows:

- **January 18-19**: Springfield
- **February 22-23**: Springfield
- **March 15-16**: Springfield
- **April 19-20**: Springfield
- **May 17-18**: Springfield
- **June 21-22**: Glen Ellyn (College Of Dupage)
- **July**: No Meeting
- **August 10**: Phone Conference (as needed)
- **August 22-25**: (Tentative)
  - Annual Work Conference
  - *Date and location to be determined*
- **September 20-21**: Chicago
- **October 18-19**: Lockport Township High School
- **November 15-16**: Springfield
- **December 13-14**: Springfield

**Funding and Disbursement**

**Regional Superintendent approval of public school calendars**

Public Act 93-1036 (Senate Bill 3000) added specific language to Section 10-19 of the Illinois School Code regarding approval of all public school calendars. The language states that “the calendar for the school term and any changes must be submitted to and approved by the regional superintendent of schools before the calendar or changes may take effect.” The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) will no longer approve public school calendars as this responsibility now falls to the regional superintendent. As a reminder, local education agencies must enter the public school calendar data in the ISBE Web Application Security System (IWAS). Please refer to Guidelines for School Calendar Preparation at: [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/ps_guidelines.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/ps_guidelines.pdf) for assistance in completing the public school calendar.

As a general rule, a Proposed Calendar should be transmitted prior to the first day of school. It is the district’s responsibility to ensure that once the Proposed Calendar has been approved, any calendar changes, including those resulting from approved waivers and modifications, are approved by the regional superintendent. If the ISBE approves a modification or the General Assembly approves a waiver following the initial approval of the calendar by the regional superintendent, then the district must submit an Amended Calendar to the appropriate regional superintendent for approval before it can implement the waiver/modification. If you have questions about the waiver process, please contact staff in Rules and Waivers at 217-782-5270.

Beginning this school year a final calendar may not be accessed for transmission prior to May 1 and should be transmitted by the last day of school.

If you need technical assistance you may contact the office of your regional superintendent or **Marj Beck** at the ISBE at [mbeck@isbe.net](mailto:mbeck@isbe.net) or 217-782-5256. If you encounter technical issues with the Public School Calendar system in IWAS, please contact the ISBE Call Center at 217-558-3600 during business hours: Monday through Friday, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**District online filing of SGSA plan**

Districts are required to electronically file FY06 Supplemental General State Aid (SGSA) plan utilizing the ISBE IWAS system. Failure to file may interrupt a district's state aid payments.

Supplemental general state aid (SGSA) comes to the district within the bi-monthly state aid payments. The amount of SGSA that each district receives is determined by part III, the poverty grant calculation, of each district's state aid claim. The school code requires districts with an average daily attendance over 1000 to submit a plan to ISBE indicating how the FY06 SGSA funds will be expended for the improvement of instruction in which priority is given to meeting the educational needs of disadvantaged students.

The requirements of the SGSA plan are the same as in previous years except that the forms and SGSA information pertaining to levels of SGSA and district average daily attendance are only available electronically. Hard copies can no longer be accepted. The IWAS SGSA system has been available for several weeks now. This is a reminder...
that statutorily the SGSA plan is required annually by October 31. Filing is simple. Go to http://www.isbe.net/, click on the IWAS tab at the top of the home page. On the IWAS page the SGSA report has been added. Complete a simple narrative on the use of the SGSA funding and how the expenditures benefit disadvantaged students, and then complete the functional expenditure listing as in the past.

For assistance in filing the SGSA plan contact Richard Loman in ISBE’s Accountability Division at 217-782-2948 or rloman@isbe.net. If you have any electronic system related problems contact our data processing Help Desk at 217-782-4313.

**General Counsel**

**Waiver deadline January 13, 2006**

The postmark deadline for all waivers that you want to implement in the fall of 2006 is Friday, January 13, 2006. For further information, please refer to the article from the August 15 Superintendent’s Bulletin (http://www.isbe.net/board/archivemessages/2005/message8-15-05.htm) or review the information on the ‘waivers’ portion of the State Board’s website: http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/default.htm.

Call Winnie Tuthill or Shelley Helton at 217-782-5270 for further information.

**Federal Grants and Programs**

**Rural and small city high schools pilot study**

The Illinois State Board of Education is seeking rural and small city high schools to participate in a program to improve high stake test results. High Schools wishing to participate must have a National Public School Locator Index Code of 6, 7 or 8. Schools must have a computer lab and the lab must be connected to the internet to participate in the program. Costs for the computer program will be provided by the Illinois State Board of Education through a grant to the school districts.

The number of pilot sites is limited and will be awarded to districts in Title I School Improvement Status on a first come, first serve basis. Other districts may apply and, if money is available, grants may be awarded to non-School Improvement Status Districts. If you have an interest in participating in this project please FAX Cynthia Newman at 217-785-9031 on school letterhead including the number of students presently enrolled in grades 9 through 12. The letter must include the superintendent’s signature. For additional information please call Cynthia Newman at 217-524-4832.

The pilot study will give students practice in taking various sample tests including the SAT and ACT. Sample tests are also available for Advanced Placement Tests in English, Mathematics and Science. Remedial tests for reading, mathematics and writing may be used for practice in test taking. Tests need not be done at school, but may be completed at home or in a public library which has Internet access.

The purpose of the pilot study is to determine if practice in taking high stake tests will improve student test scores on the PSAE/ISAT.

**English Language Learning**

**Annual Immigrant Education Program Data Report**

The 2005-06 Immigrant Education Program Data Report is available at: http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/immigrant.htm. The immigrant student count submitted by districts will be used to determine FY07 Immigrant Education Program funding eligibility and the award amount for each district. The completed report is to be submitted to ISBE by December 15, 2005. This program is authorized by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (Public Law 107-110). For school year 2005-2006, Illinois share for Immigrant Education Programs amounted to $3,709,812.

**Nutrition Programs**

**School Wellness Policy Task Force**

Public Act 94-0199 required the Illinois Department of Public Health, the Illinois Department of Human Services and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to form an interagency working group to convene a School Wellness Policy Task Force consisting of members of various organizations and agencies as identified in the legislation. Please visit http://www.isbe.net/news/pdf/school_wellness_task_force.pdf for a complete list of members and the agencies/organizations they represent.
The first School Wellness Policy Task Force meeting was held in Springfield on November 16, 2005. The legislation identifies that at a minimum the School Wellness Policy Task Force shall report its identification of barriers to implementing school wellness policies and its recommendations to reduce those barriers to the General Assembly and the Governor on or before January 1, 2006. The task force worked diligently on this task and the report will be sent to the General Assembly and Governor on the task force findings no later than January 1, 2006.

For more information about the School Wellness Policy Task Force, please contact the Nutrition Programs Division at 1-800-545-7892 or via electronic mail at cnp@isbe.net.

**National School Lunch Program report due**

Federal regulations for the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) require the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to collect the enrollment figures and the number of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunches in each site participating in NSLP. This data is collected electronically by November 15 of each year through the NSLP October Addendum.

Past due notices are being sent this week. If you’ve not yet submitted this report, please do so no later than Friday, December 2, 2005. Detailed instructions on accessing and completing this report are available at: [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/instructions.htm #nslp](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/instructions.htm #nslp) Select NSLP October Addendum. If you have questions, please contact ISBE’s Nutrition Programs Division at 800/545-7892 or cnp@isbe.net.

**Curriculum and Instruction**

**Reading Improvement Block Grant**

Vouchering for the October, 2005, disbursement of Reading Improvement Block Grant funds has been completed. Districts that were vouchedered for payment have an approved FY06 application through the e-Grants Management System, have submitted their expenditure report that was due July 31, 2005 and have an approved FY04 annual performance report on file. Please be reminded that the Reading Improvement Block Grant annual performance report for FY05 was due November 1, 2005. If you have not submitted this report, please do so as soon as possible. Please contact Laurie Lee at 217-557-7323 or lelee@isbe.net if you have questions concerning the Reading Improvement Block Grant.

**School Technology Revolving Loan Program**

The deadline for the School Technology Revolving Loan Program (STRLP) is December 1, 2005. Any applications received after that date will not be considered for funding. FY’06 loan decisions will be made on December 15, 2005. Districts receiving the loan will receive this notification in early January 2006. If you have any questions about this program, please contact Jamey Baiter at jbaiter@isbe.net.

**Illinois Reading First Round 3 Competition**

All districts intending to apply for the Round 3 Reading First Grant are encouraged to attend a two-day staff development opportunity on Thursday, December 1, and Friday, December 2, 2005.

An Exhibitors’/Vendors’ Fair will be available on Thursday, December 1. Interested districts and schools will have a chance to talk to publishers about available programs designed to address Scientifically Based Reading Research and Scientifically Based Reading Instruction. Vendors will only be available on Thursday, December 1.

On Friday, December 2, Stu Greenberg from the Florida Reading Research Center and Shari Levy, Ph.D., from the Texas Research Center will present “How to Use the Consumer’s Guide” to provide assistance in selecting appropriate core reading and supplemental and intervention programs.

This two-day event is to help districts and schools make important decisions about their student reading needs.

All grant applications are due December 22, 2005. Please register through the ISBE Reading First website.
Hotel reservations can be made by contacting:
The Holiday Inn Select Hotel and Convention Center
18501 South Harlem Avenue
Tinley Park, Illinois
Telephone: 708-444-1100

Ask for the Reading First special rate of $95 plus tax.

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 is at: http://www.niu.edu/clasep/genocide/index.html. You may also contact the institute director, Dr. J.D. Bowers at jbowersi@niu.edu. Both CPDUs and graduate credit will be available.

Superintendent’s Conference Date Saver
The Illinois State Board of Education is pleased to announce that dates have been set for the Annual Superintendents’ Conference for the next three years.

Many of you suggested that we try to set the conference at the same time each year and we have been able to accommodate this request.

The conference will be held at the Hilton Springfield Hotel on the following dates:

- Thursday-Friday, September 7 and 8, 2006
- Thursday-Friday, September 6 and 7, 2007
- Thursday-Friday, September 4 and 5, 2008

IASA pre-conference activities will continue to be held on the day prior to the conference.

Meeting The Challenge XVI
Meeting The Challenge XVI, a fine arts conference for all educators, has been planned for January 6, 2006 at Sauk Valley Community College, outside Dixon, Illinois. The theme of this conference arranged by the Whiteside Regional Office of Education and Sauk Valley Community College is Weaving the Fine Arts into the Core Curriculum. Three workshop sessions will be available to each participant in the areas of drama, visual arts, music and dance. Many of the sessions are hands-on and will provide curriculum which participants should be able to duplicate in their classrooms. The full day of activities will be awarded 5 CPDUs. Registrations postmarked by Friday, December 9, 2005 will be eligible for an early-bird discount and confirmations of registrations will follow by FAX. Full conference information, including registration form, may be accessed on the Whiteside Regional Office of Education website at http://www.whitesideroe.org/. For further questions or to request a flyer, please contact 815/625-1495.

Young Authors Conference
ISBE is pleased to announce that the 32nd Annual Illinois Statewide Young Authors Conference will be held on May 20, 2006 on the campus of Illinois State University in Bloomington. Conference guidelines can be found at: http://www.isbe.net/pdf/young_authors_conference.pdf.

The Illinois Young Authors conference is a celebration of the written work of children in kindergarten through eighth grade cosponsored by ISBE and the Illinois Language and Literacy Council. The purpose of the conference is to support classroom teachers in their efforts to encourage and improve students’ abilities in writing, reading, listening and sharing and to recognize the accomplishments of young authors. All children in kindergarten through eighth grade, including those in special programs, are encouraged to participate.

In the spring, young authors selected by their local districts are invited to attend this one-day statewide conference where their books are read, discussed and affixed with the official seal of the Young Authors Conference. The Young Authors Conference
emphasizes language as a vehicle for communication with others. In small groups, children are encouraged to share ideas with noted children’s authors, educators and other young authors. Adults who accompany children to the conference are invited to a session designed to further their insights into children’s writing.

For additional information on the Young Authors Conference, please contact Becky Phillips at 217-557-7323 or rphillip@isbe.net.

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.

- Lemont High School students have been busy volunteering and fund raising to assist victims of this disaster. LHS’ extra-curricular program, Community Service for Everyone (CSFE) teamed up with LHS parent, Terri Bielfeldt, to collect coins at the first home football game. In one evening, LHS students and parents donated over $1,000. CSFE continued this effort, setting up collection tables at the next football game, volleyball games and in the student cafeteria. To date, $1,577 has been collected and donated to the American Red Cross - Katrina Relief Fund. The parent athletic support group, Blue and Gold Backers, also donated $800 from their Split the Pot raffles at the first home football game. Students, staff, parents and community members in attendance were very generous in their giving to this cause.

  In addition, CSFE conducted a school-wide donation campaign, collecting toiletries, sheets and blankets. Working in conjunction with Citgo Refinery in Lemont, donated items were added to a truck that delivered the items to the Gulf Coast. Additional items went to Southwest Suburban PADS, to assist their Tinley Park facility, which was taking in victims of the hurricane.

  During Homecoming Week, students sold Spirit Links and donated the profits to the American Red Cross - Katrina Relief Fund. Student Council led this effort and accumulated $522 for the cause.

  More recently, the LHS Culinary Arts class held a school-wide bread sale. For a $10 donation to the American Red Cross - Katrina Relief Fund, the Culinary Arts class baked up mini-loaves of bread in sets of five - pumpkin nut, banana, sour cream cinnamon, and poppy seed lemon. The Culinary Arts class raised $430 with this effort.

  At the October Board Meeting the four Students of the Month donated their $100 donation to the American Red Cross - Katrina Relief Fund. They felt there was a critical need for the funds to be put to good use for others.

  As the school year continues, Lemont High School students, faculty and staff will continue to look for ways to assist the community - local or otherwise - in effective ways.

- In Northbrook a number of the district’s schools have held and continue to hold ongoing fundraising efforts and events:

  Meadowbrook School's fundraising effort for Hurricane Katrina raised $10,000 through a car wash, a Walk-a-Thon, bake sales, and various individual and classroom efforts. Of that, $5,000 will go directly to the American Red Cross. The other $5,000 is targeted for the public schools in Pass Christian, Louisiana. Those schools are in dire need of books, especially reference materials. Meadowbrook Parent/Teacher Organization (PTO) parents Emily Dischinger and Beth Hirshman coordinated all of the relief efforts at Meadowbrook School. Northbrook Bank and Trust has donated piggy banks for each classroom to deposit individual spare change donations.

  Greenbriar School in Northbrook had a Kool-Aid for Katrina event in which students were given a "start-up kit for a lemonade stand from the PTO Community Projects group with all
proceeds going toward a monetary donation for hurricane relief. There was a lemonade stand at Curriculum Night September 6 and at Greyhound Games September 14. Greenbriar School raised $5,747.66 from its student lemonade stand projects and from face painting and lemonade stand sales at Greyhound Games September 14, and from spare change. Staff members provided face painting for a donation at Greyhound Games September 14. All proceeds supported purchase of Back-to-School Backpacks, school supplies, stuffed animals and games for Jefferson Parish School in Louisiana this fall. Nearly 52 boxes with approximately 350 backpacks, stuffed with the supplies and including personal notes and cards from the students, were purchased and filled by students on October 3 and sent on October 5. Piggy banks were delivered to each Greenbriar classroom from Northbrook Bank and Trust for spare change. Money from the piggy banks was added to the money from face painting and lemonade stands. Greenbriar School collected $480 in donations during the Scholastic Book Fair October 20-22, to be used, along with money left over from the lemonade stands and face painting efforts, to purchase 600 new books from the Jefferson Parish School book wish-list, one for each K-6th grade child at Jefferson Parish School. The books will be ordered in the next few weeks and sent to Louisiana in December for the holidays. Greenbriar PTO Parents Karen Goodrich and Ellen Westel are co-chairs of the Book Fair efforts. Children are asking family and friends to sponsor them for how many steps they do in gym class for the Winter Walk-A-Thon. Funds will be used either for a monetary donation or another effort later in the school year. Greenbriar PTO Parent Susan Zera is the overall hurricane relief coordinator.

Westmoor School has chosen "Operation Gator" as its theme for the entire hurricane relief effort. The school raised $1,400 at its Bake Sale and sale of student-made Gator Key Chains at conference day September 15. Under its Operation Gator "Chores for Change" project, Westmoor kids do chores around the house, have parents sign a slip verifying the work, and drop the chore ticket and the money in a Katrina relief piggy bank (donated by Northbrook Band and Trust) in the classrooms. A large Gator Gauge at the school records how much has been collected. The goal was for each student to earn $2 per week by doing chores over a 4-week period. Northbrook Bank and Trust will match funds with a 25 percent donation up to $500. The school goal is to reach $2,000. Westmoor will be actively supporting and supplying a sister school in the affected area to assist in rebuilding when the time is appropriate. As of October 20, the school has raised $1,172.08 toward the $2,000 goal. The "Chores for Change" effort will continue until the goal is reached.

Westmoor School Girl Scout troops sponsored a Pajama Drive September 28 - October 14, for children who were victims of Hurricane Katrina. The Scouts collected about 100 pairs of pajamas and almost as many books. The Scouts are working with an organization out of New York called "Pajama Program." The boxes of pajamas and books were sent in late October to a contact person in Houston. This person and her crew from "Pajama Program" will take the pajamas and books by truck to the Convention Center in New Orleans, from which they will be distributed to needy families. More information is available at http://www.pajamaprogram.org/.

During the Westmoor School Fall Book Fair October 19 through 21, visitors donated 684 gently used books for hurricane victims. Additionally, $350 dollars worth of new books were purchased through the One for Books donation program offered during Westmoor's recent book fair. New books purchased will go to the The Learn School, a charter school in Chicago serving underprivileged children. Books were delivered to the Learn School along with Halloween treat bags made by the second and fifth graders at Westmoor.

Northbrook Junior High raised $2,000 at a car wash September 10; the school raised a total of $3,500, including individual student donations.

- The Farmerville Grade School and the Raymond Grade School collected school supplies and books for the children affected by Hurricane Katrina. The students in each school also contributed money to the relief efforts during our Quarters for Katrina fundraiser. The school supplies that were donated by the children of our district were sent to the Gateway Rescue Center in Pearl, Mississippi. This center was sponsored by the Mississippi Department of Education and was designated as a collection site for school supplies and books for the public
school children that have been affected by Hurricane Katrina. The students, teachers, and the community worked hard during these relief efforts, and their efforts were a good example of the kindness and generosity of the people in the Panhandle School District.

- **Dallas CUSD #336**, a small school district of 250 students in West Central Illinois, raised over $2400 for Hurricane Katrina relief efforts. Students paid money to wear caps, pajamas and to have special privileges in the classroom. Teachers allowed students to purchase lunches with them for the day. A class reunion was also held in the Pre-K for an hour, which raised $300. The principal allowed students to purchase duct at five-cents an inch so they could duct tape him to the wall. He also received three pies in the face for dollar goals reached. The check was presented by the Student Council to the American Red Cross on the local TV station.

- **The Oak Lawn Community High School** Students Against Drunk Driving (SADD) Chapter and the Student Mentor Program raised over $4,500 for the American Red Cross Hurricane Relief Fund. The students conducted the SOS (Spartans Offer Support) campaign. The campaign offered students and staff members two opportunities to donate money. Students and staff members could donate their pocket change in buckets located around the school labeled "Koins for Katrina" or they could purchase New Orleans style "Beads for a Buck."

- **Dorn Primary Center's** Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in Hickory Hills raised $3,000 by hosting a community Garage Sale. PTA Executive Board Members **Mary Jo Sanchez**, **Lucy Wrobel**, **Pam Rentauskas** and **Katie Pituch** organized the event. Community members donated various items that were sold at the garage sale. The PTA gave $1,000 each to three deserving charities. Staff and students also did a coin collection. $696.80 was raised and matched by the IFH Group in Rock Falls. Parents **Mr. and Mrs. Ryl-Kuchar** helped to coordinate the effort.

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**ISBE employment opportunities**

**External vacancy list**

An External Vacancy List for the Illinois State Board of Education is available at: [http://www.isbe.net/hr/pdf/VL05-31.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/hr/pdf/VL05-31.pdf)

**In the News**

**Weekly news clips**