Weekly Message from State Superintendent Randy Dunn

Good afternoon. I’m going to use the opener for the next couple of weeks, actually, to update readers on developments with the highly qualified requirements under No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Nearly every district is continuing to work with staff to ensure they meet the NCLB requirements, be it highly qualified for instructional personnel working in core subject areas or qualified for paraprofessionals in Title I-funded schools. This challenging process began back in 2002 with the enactment of the NCLB law.

As I think most of you are aware, states were to have met all requirements by the conclusion of the 2005-06 school year. However, states were advised this past October by Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings that there could be an opportunity to extend the time for completing the work of meeting the Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) requirements under NCLB by a year. Spellings noted in a letter to the states that “…despite the progress we are making, there is still a lot of work to do to ensure that each State can meet the goal that every child is taught by a highly qualified teacher by the end of the 2005-06 school year.” She stated further that information from individual states would be reviewed to ascertain whether or not “good faith efforts” had been made to fulfill these NCLB requirements.

On March 6, then, we submitted Illinois’ Consolidated State Performance Report which served as the basis of our good faith review and we subsequently asked the feds to consider our request to meet the 100 percent goal by the end of 2006-07. We asked to continue with our plans to allow teachers to work toward becoming highly qualified, and congruence for our paraprofessionals to work to become qualified during the same period of time.

As I mentioned above, this entire process has been a challenge. And the reality is that while progress has absolutely been made statewide, there are still locations where there are not highly qualified teachers in place for all core subject area assignments. The reasons for this are numerous:

• The U.S. Department of Education (USED) has approved certain areas as designated teacher shortage areas in core subject areas during 2005-06—Special Education (Cross Categorical, Emotionally Disturbed [BD], Specific Learning Disability [LD], and Speech/Language Impairment); Bilingual Education; Mathematics; Music (K-8); Reading; and Science.

• Rural areas of the state continue to look for qualified personnel in select core subject areas.

• Illinois’ February 2006 rules on Highly Qualified Teachers/HOUSSE meant a scramble for personnel to review their credentials against the new worksheet that was derived from those rules.

• Enrollments are expected to continue growing at the secondary level and continue declining at the elementary level. (Illinois public school enrollments have been increasing since 1990, and that overall trend is expected to continue through 2009.) But as the lion’s share of the growth in the next few years will be at the secondary level, this intensifies our problems in covering core subject areas. For the fourth straight year, special education, Spanish, and mathematics were at the top of the Illinois list in terms of both the number of districts reporting a shortage and the severity of the shortage reported. Finally, through 2009, it is estimated that Illinois will need over 36,000 general education and 8,000 special education teachers. The Educator Supply and Demand Study: 2005 Annual Report is particularly interesting in this regard. You can read it at http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/supply_demand_05.pdf.
Next week, what I want to do is spend some time talking about those good faith efforts we have made in Illinois around HQT, all of it through your hard work and dedicated efforts. I’ll be sharing particulars on that next week.

On the Harcourt front, we are finishing with our last districts on the ISAT testing, with materials getting returned for scoring without major incident. We have a strong Quality Control and Assurance plan in place—including our staffers and independent third-party contractors on the ground with Harcourt in San Antonio—so as not to repeat problems on PSAE distribution, and to ensure a reliable and valid scoring and reporting process for both tests.

We survived another tornado in Springfield last night. I hope we’re done with all that for awhile. Enjoy your Final Four parties tonight—then get ready for baseball! Have a great week.

Randy Dunn

Upcoming Deadlines

Physical Education Grant Applications – April 12, 2006
Fourth Quarter Hurricane Education Recover Act Counts Due – April 14, 2006
American Stars of Teaching Award nominations – April 15, 2006
Great American Bake Sale Grant Application – April 15, 2006
Nature of Learning Start-Up Grants – April 17, 2006
Public Comment Deadline – Gifted Education Rules – May 15, 2006
Public Comment Deadline – Part 675 Rules – Supplemental Education Services –
May 15, 2006
Early Childhood Block Grant – May 19, 2006
Public Comment Deadline – Part 1500 – School Emergency and Crisis Response Plans – May 22, 2006
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Art Contest – May 31, 2006
Public Comment on Special Education Rulemaking – September 15, 2006

Grants

AEDGrant.com

Generous donations, corporate backing, and AED manufacturer sponsors have joined forces at http://www.AEDGrant.com for access to grant applications for the purchase of an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

Upon approval of the grant application, participants can receive funding for as much as one third the cost of an AED device. For Illinois Grant Applicants, this end price can then be used in conjunction with the Illinois AED Heartsaver matching funds program to even further reduce the cost of AED deployment.

Curriculum and Instruction

School District (K-12) Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist

Local education agencies (LEAs) play an integral role in protecting the health and safety of their district’s staff, students and their families. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed a checklist to assist LEAs in developing and/or improving plans to prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic. The key planning activities in this checklist build upon existing contingency plans recommended for school districts by the U. S. Department of Education (Practical Information on Crisis Planning: A Guide for Schools and Communities http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/crisisplanning.pdf).

The checklist and further information on pandemic influenza can be found at http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/schoolchecklist.html.
**Rules**

**Invitation to Comment on Rules**

Three sets of proposed rules recently reviewed by the State Board of Education are currently available for public comment. These items have been posted on the agency’s web site at [http://www.isbe.net/rules/](http://www.isbe.net/rules/); choose “Proposed Rules and Amendments”. Please submit any comments or suggestions you may have to rules@isbe.net.

**Part 227 (Gifted Education)**

An entire new set of proposed rules implementing 2005 legislation that reauthorized this program; funding is uncertain at this point

*Deadline for Public Comment: May 15, 2006*

**Part 675 (Providers of Supplemental Educational Services)**

Enhancements to the Code of Ethics; evaluation rubric; other accountability-related provisions

*Deadline for Public Comment: May 15, 2006*

**Part 1500 (Joint Rules of the Office of the State Fire Marshal and the State Board of Education: School Emergency and Crisis Response Plans)**

A new set of rules implementing 2005 legislation that requires specified safety drills and an annual review of schools’ emergency preparedness

*Deadline for Public Comment: May 22, 2006*

**Notice of Completed Rulemaking**

Please be advised that two other rulemaking items recently adopted by the State Board of Education are now in effect. These sets of rules have been posted on the agency’s web site at [http://www.isbe.net/rules/](http://www.isbe.net/rules/); choose “Rules Currently in Effect” and scroll to the relevant Part number.

**Low-Income Students Funds Plan (Part 203)**

A new consolidated Part that replaces Parts 201 and 202, which were repealed.

*Affected Sections: All*

*Effective Date: February 28, 2006*

**Early Childhood Block Grant (Part 235)**

Updated rules replacing the earlier set with the same number.

*Affected Sections: All*

*Effective Date: February 28, 2006*

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**Early Childhood**

**Early Childhood Block Grant RFP for 0 to 3 Released**

The Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) for Birth to Age 3 Years: Early Learning Partners – 07 Request for Proposals (RFP) for new funds has been released. This RFP is for Prevention Initiative programs offering coordinated services to at risk children and their families. Public school districts, university laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), charter schools, area vocational centers, and other entities are eligible to submit a proposal. Applicants other than public school districts must provide evidence of existing competencies to provide early childhood education programs.

The RFPs are available online at [http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/block_grant.htm](http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/block_grant.htm) or by contacting the Early Childhood Division at 217-524-4835.

Bidders’ conferences will be held for this RFP. Attendance is recommended but is not required. Security procedures require photo identification for entry at each location.

**Springfield**

Wednesday, April 12, 2006 - 1 to 4 p.m.
IEA - Professional Development Center
3440 Liberty Drive
(Between Washington and Jefferson)
Board Room

**Chicago**

Wednesday, April 19, 2006 - 1 to 4 p.m.
State of Illinois Building (Bilandic Building)
160 North LaSalle
(Across from the James R. Thompson Center)
5th Floor, Room C-500

Should the conditions of this RFP change as a result of the bidders’ conference, the State Board of Education will notify all recipients of the RFP of the changes.
Early Childhood Block Grant
continuation applications on IWAS

Continuing applications for the Early Childhood Block Grant (ECBG) will be available during the week of April 3, 2006 through the Electronic Grant Management System (eGMS) for school year 2006-2007 (FY07). All Early Childhood Block Grant programs funded in FY06 will apply online for their FY07 continuation grant funds. Programs will be applying for 100 percent of their current funding. Two ECBG continuation grant applications will be available – a birth to three application and a three to five application. Applicants will complete both applications if they are authorized to offer programs for birth to three and three to five. All applications must be submitted to ISBE by May 19, 2006.

If you have questions, please contact the Early Childhood Division at 217-524-4835.

Legislation

Spring Session Update

The following bills are have passed both Chambers and will be sent to the Governor. A bill will not become law until signed by the Governor and given a Public Act number. As bills are passed and signed or vetoed, the information will be updated on the Governmental Relations page on the website. To access that page, please go to: http://www.isbe.net/gov_relations/default.htm.

The web page will also provide instructions for how to view these bills or any other online on the General Assembly webpage. For any additional information, you can contact Nicole Wills or Josh Jacobs in ISBE’s Governmental Relations Division at 217-782-6510.

HB 2734 - Provides that the minimum rate shall be 20 cents per column line for each insertion of a document by an official body or board in a newspaper and provides that the maximum rate for each insertion of a document by a public body or board in a newspaper shall not exceed the newspaper's annually published rate for comparable local advertising space.

HB 4308 - Requires the State Board of Education's annual budget to set out by separate line item the appropriation for the Illinois Teaching Excellence Program.

HB 4310 - Requires that newly elected school board members take an oath of office and states school board duties.

HB 4365 - Allows cooperative high schools to receive some of the same supplementary State aid that new districts receive.

HB 4782 - Prohibits a vehicle using diesel fuel with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating of more than 8,000 pounds (including a school bus) from idling its engine for more than five minutes within any 60 minute period in certain counties.

HB 4832 - Creates the Community Education Program to allow a school district to establish a community education program that must include local input, a Director of Community Education, the non-duplication of programs, community education consortiums, partnership agreements, funding, and grants.

HB 4986 - Provides that a school district that offers a secondary agricultural education program must include a State and nationally affiliated FFA chapter that is integral to instruction and is not treated as an extracurricular activity.

HB 5550 - In a provision concerning the loan of textbooks by the State Board of Education, provides that certain bonding requirements do not apply to the loan of textbooks.

SB 2191 - Expands consumer education to provide that the instruction must include an understanding of the basic concepts of financial literacy, including installment purchasing, budgeting, savings and investing, banking, understanding simple contracts, State and federal income taxes, personal insurance policies, and the comparison of prices (now, the instruction must include installment purchasing, budgeting, and the comparison of prices).

SB 2546 - Provides that the State Board of Education has the power and duty to collect and maintain data regarding teacher preparation, including the number of students attempting and passing the basic skills test and the number of students attempting and passing subject-matter tests.

SB 2630 - Provides that each school district may make suitable provisions for instruction in bullying prevention in all grades and include such instruction in the courses of study regularly taught therein and provides that a school board may collaborate with a community-based agency providing specialized
curricula in bullying prevention whose ultimate outcome is to prevent sexual violence.

**SB 2882 -** Amends the current Class Size Reduction Grant Act to create a pilot program to be implemented and administered by ISBE to award grants to schools to defray the costs and expenses of operating and maintaining classes of no more than 15 pupils per teacher per class.

**SB 2829 - (Less Red Tape Initiative) This** is an initiative of the State Board that came as a result of a call to reduce red tape and unnecessary bureaucracy for school districts. ISBE launched a "Less Red Tape" initiative, soliciting feedback from educators and parents about how to reduce burdens in schools. The bill reflects input from the field since 2004 and discussions and negotiations with the management alliance, regional superintendents, teacher's unions and other interested parties. It makes a number of changes, some of which include changes concerning the school building code, school and district improvement plans, the waiver and modification of mandates, staff development plans, statements of affairs, criminal history records checks of school district employees, and transportation reimbursement claims. Repeals a Section concerning latch key reports and a Section concerning school and district improvement panels.

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**Hurricane Education Recovery Act**

The Fourth Quarter Count Date under the Hurricane Education Recovery Act was April 1, 2006. Local Educational Agencies must submit Quarter 4 counts (and any adjustments to counts for Quarters 1, 2 and 3) to ISBE by no later than April 14, 2006. For those LEAs that have submitted applications for Quarters 1, 2 and 3, Rich Dehart at ISBE will be contacting you directly by e-mail with instructions as to how and where to submit your final data.

We have been notified by the US Department of Education (USDE) that we are going to be receiving the next installment of Q1 funds as well as funds for Quarters 2 and 3. The per student rates have been set by USDE at $1,000 per non-disabled student and $1,250 per disabled student. We intend to make payments to eligible LEAs promptly following the April 14 deadline for LEAs’ submission to ISBE of Q4 counts (and adjustments).

Also, please note that the USED has come out with Volume II of Frequently Asked Questions on Emergency Impact Aid for Displaced Students: [http://www.isbe.net/katrina/Hurr_Ed_Rec_Act_FAQ_2.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/katrina/Hurr_Ed_Rec_Act_FAQ_2.pdf). We also recommend that you review Volume I: [http://www.isbe.net/katrina/Hurr_Ed_Rec_Act_FAQ.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/katrina/Hurr_Ed_Rec_Act_FAQ.pdf). The Volume II FAQs discuss matters including LEAs’ use of funds and recordkeeping. Most interestingly, though, Volume II of the FAQs now permits an LEA that missed the January 26, 2006 deadline to, under certain conditions, submit an application for Quarters 2, 3 and/or 4 (these LEAs still cannot receive any funds for Quarter 1).

Therefore, if your district missed the January 26, 2006 deadline, and you wish to apply for funds for Quarters 2, 3 and/or 4, please contact Rich Dehart at 217-782-2948 as soon as possible to determine if your district is eligible to submit an application and receive funds.

We also provide here a link to an article from the NCLB Financial Compliance Insider regarding preparation for audits of hurricane aid: [http://www.isbe.net/katrina/Audits_Hurricane_Aid.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/katrina/Audits_Hurricane_Aid.pdf).

If you have any question about the Hurricane Education Recovery Act or this message, please visit our website [http://www.isbe.net/katrina/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/katrina/default.htm) or call Rich Dehart at 217-782-2948 or Darren Reisberg at 312-814-2223.

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**Nutrition**

**School Year 2006 Commodities Stored Over Summer Break**

In an attempt to reduce/eliminate out-of-date product being shipped in the subsequent school year, the Illinois State Board of Education did not encourage over summer storage of school year (SY) 2005 commodities. For this same reason, we also ask all SY2006 commodities stored over the summer be delivered within the first three months of SY2007 (August, September, and October 2006). If you have any SY2006 commodities you know you will not use, please contact Food Distribution staff by May 1, 2006, so they can unallocate these items from you and allocate them to schools that can use them before the expiration date. You can call and talk with Food Distribution Program staff in the Nutrition Programs Division at (217) 782-2491.
**Important Dates**

April 12  Physical Education Program Award Applications due; see article under Grants, Awards, and Honors

April 15  Last date to complete applications for funds raised through the 2005 Great American Bake Sale


**The Great American Bake Sale® grant applications due April 15**

Attention all after-school and summer meal programs—Visit The Great American Bake Sale website at [http://www.strength.org/gabs/](http://www.strength.org/gabs/) to learn about a funding opportunity for after-school and summer meal programs. The Great American Bake Sale will support efforts to increase participation among low-income children in after-school and summer meal programs that utilize USDA reimbursement through the Summer Food Service Program, the National School Lunch Program, or the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The Great American Bake Sale is presented by PARADE Magazine and Share Our Strength. Share Our Strength will only provide grants to registered nonprofit organizations with Internal Revenue Service 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) tax-exempt status, government entities (such as Department of Parks and Recreation that sponsor USDA meal programs), and to schools with a valid National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) code.

Sponsors of USDA summer and after-school meal programs must also have a valid USDA agreement code. You must provide copies of official documentation of these requirements (i.e., your 501(c)(3) letter, your NCES documentation, and your USDA agreement letter). Applications for funds raised through the 2005 Great American Bake Sale will be available from March 1, 2006, to April 15, 2006. For specific grants-related questions not answered on our website, contact Lori Hawkins, Grants Program Assistant at 202-478-6571.

**Spring Training Events Announced by National Food Service Management Institute**

The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) has posted the following training events for spring.

**April 11–12, 2006**

Tools for Menu Planning Seminar—This two-day, entry-level seminar presents tools for child nutrition professionals who plan menus for the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. The focus will be planning nutritious and appealing meals for children while emphasizing the links between menu planning, nutrition integrity, and fiscal responsibility in program operations.

**May 2–3, 2006**

Food Buying Guide for Child Nutrition Programs Training Seminar—The National Food Service Management Institute (NFSMI) in cooperation with USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service, has developed training materials to accompany USDA’s Food Buying Guide (FBG). This course provides a comprehensive look at the contents of FBG. Worksheets to support participants in performing the demonstrated calculations and learning activities that provide participants with extensive hands-on practice using FBG are included in this course.

**June 12–16, 2006**

Orientation to Child Nutrition Management Seminar—Five-day seminars for new and aspiring Child Nutrition Program (CNP) directors. Classroom instruction, web-based activities, hands-on activities, and group projects provide training essential to the operation of CNP that are customer-oriented, cost-effective, and promote healthy eating behaviors. Management topics include customer service, financial management and record keeping, menu planning and food production, facility layout and design, safety and sanitation, purchasing, personnel management, nutrition education, and marketing.

For more information, visit NFSMI’s website at [http://www.nfsmi.org/](http://www.nfsmi.org/).

**Federal Procurement Regulations Update**

**Bid Document Development**

Federal regulation 7 CFR Part 3016.36(b) prohibits the awarding of contracts to any person or entity that develops or drafts specifications, requirements, statements of work, invitations for bids, requests for
proposals, contract terms and conditions, or other procurement documents. In failing to fulfill its responsibilities to draft its own specifications and procurement documents, a school food authority (SFA) which copies a list of features or evaluation and ranking criteria drafted by a potential vendor and then permits that potential vendor to submit a bid has violated federal regulation 7 CFR Part 3016.60(b). This pertains to all child nutrition program procurements, including software acquisitions. While schools have broad discretion in gathering information for use in connection with procurements, information from potential bidders must be appropriately modified to develop tailored specifications; otherwise these bidders must be excluded from competing for such procurements. This is to ensure objective contractor performance and eliminate unfair competitive advantage.

**Bid Protests**

Any action which diminishes open and free competition seriously undermines the integrity of the procurement process and may subject an SFA to bid protests. SFAs are responsible for properly responding to protests and concerns raised by potential contractors. Pursuant to §3016.36(b) (12), SFAs must have protest procedures in place to handle and resolve disputes relating to their procurements and must in all instances disclose information regarding a protest to the Illinois State Board of Education Nutrition Programs Division.

**Student Opportunities**

**Idea of America Essay Contest**

The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) invites 11th grade students to participate in a nationwide essay contest. The contest is part of *We the People*, a national civics and American history education initiative. This year’s essay question asks students to examine the historical debate over the benefits and disadvantages of adopting the First Amendment.

Contest finalists will travel to Washington, D.C. for a national award ceremony. The grand prize winner will receive a cash prize of $5,000 and three finalists will receive $1,000 each. The deadline for the 1,500 word essay is April 19, 2006.

Please visit [http://www.humanities.gov](http://www.humanities.gov) for more information or email ideaofamerica@neh.gov with questions.