Good afternoon.

This afternoon I want to bring attention to an event our English Language Learning Division is sponsoring to address a growing need around the state—our growing Limited English Proficient and bilingual populations. In 1998 there were a combined 25,911 students in Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) and Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI) Programs in Illinois. By 2004 that number had grown to 157,146.

To promote awareness and involvement among the parents of this student population, we will host The First Annual Statewide Summit for Bilingual Parents on Saturday, May 20, at the Oakbrook Marriot. If your district has a bilingual program, I encourage you to register a delegation of bilingual parents who are members of Parent Advisory Councils (PACs) and staff who work with the PACs.

Beyond that, I’ve heard from a few folks that there may be some confusion about which districts can send parents to the conference. A district does not need a TBE or TPI Program in place to send parents to the summit. While priority for reimbursement will be given to districts that have TBE or TPI programs, all districts can and should send bilingual parents to this event. The summit is focused on helping parents learn more about:

- how school districts are organized and how they function;
- the educational opportunities and programs provided by school districts to bilingual students and their families;
- the importance of parent, school and community partnerships to enhance teaching and learning; and
- strategies for effective communication, leadership and advocacy for PAC members.

State Board Chairman Jesse H. Ruiz will speak at the event, along with Senator Miguel del Valle and Lily Wong Fillmore, University of California, Berkeley, one of the nation’s top experts on the education of language-minority students. I plan to be present to offer a few words of wisdom. The keynote speeches will be delivered in English and concurrent sessions will be presented in Spanish, English or both languages. Details on registration are included in an article below.

This will be the first of what we hope will be a series of conferences for PAC members to support you in your work on behalf of bilingual students, their schools and their families. I hope you will make plans to organize and register your delegation and encourage other bilingual parents in your district to attend. I look forward to seeing you on May 20th in Oak Brook.

Have a great week.

Randy Dunn
Upcoming Deadlines

Grant Training Registration Deadline – April 28, 2006
Bilingual Parent Summit Registration Deadline – May 5, 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 15, 2006
Ministry of Foreign Affairs Art Contest – May 19, 2006
Call for Workshop Proposals - Partners in Success for New Americans Family – June 1, 2006
Proposed Public School Calendar – June 15, 2006
Midwest Clean Diesel Initiative Grant Deadlines – June 16, 2006
Public Comment on Special Education Rulemaking – September 15, 2006

Student Expression

Immigration Reform

The Illinois State Board of Education has received calls and emails about the possibility of a major student event across the nation on May 1 to protest immigration policies.

Elgin U-46 has shared plans it has for a positive, proactive event on May 1. The district encouraged us to share their ideas with districts around the state. Their event is entirely student-driven by Students for Immigrant Justice. Their planned events focus on open expression and raising awareness. Details include:

- Students will meet in front of the school’s flagpole before school where they will say the Pledge of Allegiance to demonstrate their respect for the United States and its flag.
- Students will walk IN for education to their classes.
- Students will hand out white ribbons to all who want to support or learn about the campaign inside the school.
- Students will wear white clothing.
- Students will not make any purchases in school that day, including but not limited to school lunch, snack line, vending machine, fundraising and tickets to school-related events.
- Students will have a presentation during the school day that invites all who want to learn more about immigration reform to attend.

The demonstration is planned to express thoughts and opinions, with a call for solutions.

If districts encounter student walkouts on May 1 or any other time, they should follow existing district disciplinary policies and procedures.

English Language Learning

Bilingual Parent Summit

The First Annual Statewide Summit for Bilingual Parents will be held on Saturday, May 20, 2006 at the Oakbrook Marriot Resort, Oak Brook, Illinois from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The registration deadline is Friday, May 5. Topics of focus will include:

- the role and responsibilities of PAC members,
- the educational opportunities and programs provided by districts for bilingual students and their families,
- strategies for effective communication,
- leadership and advocacy for PAC members and how schools districts are organized and how they function.

The registration form is online at http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/pdfs/summit_bilingual_parents.pdf To register and receive reimbursement for up to five participants, please download, fill out and send the registration form along with payment to the Illinois Resource Center by Friday, May 5.

If you have questions please call Paula McDaniel at 847-803-3535. Districts may use State bilingual and Federal Title III funds to pay for additional participants at the Parent Summit.

Call for conference workshop sessions:

The Illinois State Board of Education English Language Learning Division is soliciting Proposals from professionals in education, health care, family support services, university faculty and other areas of refugee and immigrant concerns for the Partners in Success for New Americans Family ~ School ~ Health: 2006 Refugee and Immigrant Conference September 19 and 20 in Chicago.
The aim of this conference is to enhance shared understandings and collaborative partnerships by providing those who work with refugees and immigrants an opportunity to learn from and to network with one another. Refugees and other immigrants in the U.S. must do their best to manage transitions and adjustments in new communities. Many families endure poverty, low wage employment and attend schools under strain. Frequently, it is these families’ first experience with formal education and urban life. Along with these struggles, however, comes evidence of strength and resilience, including healthy families, strong work ethic and aspirations, cohesive communities and faith.

Services for pre-school and K-12 refugee youth and their families may be compromised by differing perceptions and misunderstandings (by both the families and those who provide services) concerning health and nutrition, public education enrollment and attendance, academic roles and expectations and American conventions and laws. Efforts to help refugee youth and families will have a better chance of succeeding if they are based on shared understandings and collaborative partnerships among families, schools, health and mental health providers.

Respond to the Call for Workshop Sessions below with proposals that address these and related issues. The proposals will be evaluated on the basis of clarity, relevance of content, replicability for other situations and programs and interest to the conference audience. Please help us meet our schedule by completing the application and returning it by June 1, 2006.

Conference sponsors are:

- Illinois Department of Human Resources (IDHS)
- Illinois Refugee Children School Impact Grant (ILRCSIG)
- Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)
- Jewish Family and Community Services (JFCS)
- International Center on Response to Catastrophes at the University of Illinois/Chicago (UIC/ICORC)
- Adult Learning Resource Center (ALRC)
Curriculum and Instruction

Physical education curriculum analysis tool now available

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is pleased to announce that the Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool (PECAT) is now available to help school districts conduct clear, complete and consistent analyses of written physical education curricula, based upon national physical education standards. The tool features:

- instructions for completing the PECAT;
- preliminary curriculum considerations, such as accuracy and feasibility analyses;
- content and student assessment analyses;
- customizable templates for state or local use
- scorecards and curriculum improvement plans that can be shared with key stakeholders, school administrators or other groups interested in strengthening physical education programs; and
- results from the analysis can help schools enhance existing curriculum, develop their own curriculum or select a published curriculum, for the delivery of quality physical education in schools.

The tool is available online at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/pecat/. For questions about using PECAT in your local setting, contact Sarah Lee at skeuplee@cdc.gov or call 770-488-6126.

Arts and Foreign Language Grants available

The Illinois State Board of Education has announced grants to help districts with the planning process to develop curricula for new or existing fine arts or foreign language programs. The grants will range from $10,000 to $40,000 depending on size, scope and planning required. The RFP is available online at: http://www.isbe.net/ils/foreign_languages/pdf/arts_forgn_lang_rfp.pdf

For more information, call Lou Berkman at 312-814-3853 or Joyce Krumtinger at 217-577-7323 in our Division of Curriculum and Instruction.

Special Education

New guidance documents available online

The Illinois State Board of Education Special Education Department has posted two new guidance documents online.

The Students with Disabilities in Regional Safe School Programs memorandum updates a November 8, 2001 memorandum on the placement of and provision of services to, students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in Regional Safe Schools Programs (RSSPs). This guidance is available at: http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/guidance_5-11.pdf

The Supplemental Guidance Information to Memorandum #05-7 (August 11, 2005) regarding the non-public proportionate share is available online at: http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/guidance_5-7.pdf

One percent exception application reminder

If more than one percent of students in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 11 are identified as significantly cognitively disabled, districts must prepare a request for an exception to the one percent cap. If the conditions for the exception are approved, then all progressing and attaining scores earned by students taking the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) will be counted as proficient in making determinations for school, district and state AYP.

K-8 districts may apply now since ISAT testing is completed. High school and K-12 districts must apply after the PSAE makeup test dates May 10 and 11.

External Assurance

SES Parent Surveys distributed to schools

The Center for Research in Educational Policy (CREP) at the University of Memphis is assisting ISBE in the evaluation of the effectiveness of providers of Supplemental Educational Services (SES). Part of that evaluation involves collecting information from parents about the SES programs their children have participated in and parental satisfaction with those programs for the 2005-06 school year. CREP is distributing parent surveys to the SES schools along with an informational letter to school personnel describing the process and providing contact information should schools have specific questions or need additional copies of the forms, but schools and districts may also contact Dr. Gary Greene at 217-782-7970 or ggreene@isbe.net. The fullest possible parental participation in this survey process is important, so ISBE asks the help of schools and districts in assisting with the distribution of the forms and in encouraging parents to complete and submit the forms.
Applications are due Thursday, June 1, 2006. The form may be mailed or FAXED to 217/782-0372, attention Pearl Schneider.

The form and instructions are available online at: http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/37-58_percent_cap_form.pdf

For additional information please contact Pearl Schneider at 217/782-5589 or via email at pschneid@isbe.net.

Professional Development

Illinois ASPIRE

The Illinois State Board of Education is pleased to announce Illinois ASPIRE, the Illinois Alliance for School-based Problem-solving and Intervention Resources in Education. This training and technical assistance project is funded through a five-year State Personnel Grant under Part D of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

The primary goal of Illinois ASPIRE is to establish and implement a coordinated, regionalized system of personnel development that will increase the capacity of school systems to provide early intervening services, aligned with the general education curriculum, to at-risk students and students with disabilities, as measured by improved student progress and performance.

Illinois ASPIRE will be carried out through four regional centers—one in Chicago and one each in the northern, central and southern parts of the state. To establish the Illinois ASPIRE Centers, ISBE issued a Request for Proposals in October 2005 and applications were due in December 2005. The Illinois ASPIRE Center grants were awarded in February 2006 to:

- Illinois ASPIRE – Chicago: Chicago Public Schools, District 299
- Illinois ASPIRE – North: Northern Suburban Special Education District
- Illinois ASPIRE – Central: Peoria Regional Office of Education #48
- Illinois ASPIRE – South: Southern Illinois University – Edwardsville and Carbondale

All Illinois ASPIRE Centers will provide standardized professional development and technical assistance to educators and parents in their geographic regions, focused on the following topics:

- designing and providing early intervening services, with an emphasis on reading instruction that is scientifically research-based;
- student progress monitoring;
- response to intervention; and
- standards-aligned instruction and assessment.

A unique aspect of Illinois ASPIRE is the fact that it is designed to integrate components of the Illinois Flexible Service Delivery System, Illinois Reading First and the Standards-Aligned Classroom Initiative.

To facilitate school- and student-level data collection and evaluation, school demonstration/data collection sites will be identified within each region through a Request for Proposals process. These sites will receive training and technical assistance services from the Illinois ASPIRE Centers.

For more information about Illinois ASPIRE, the regional centers and applying to serve as a demonstration/data collection site, please visit the ISBE website at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/html/illinois-aspire.htm or contact Kathryn Cox in the Special Education Services Division at 217-782-5589 or kcox@isbe.net.

2006 Working Connections Institute

Registration for the 2006 Working Connections IT Faculty Development Institute scheduled for June 19-23 is now open. The cost of the Institute is $700 for double occupancy or $800 for single occupancy. The cost includes hotel, training, breakfast and lunches.

Features for this year's Institute are as follows:

- Six Curriculum Tracks to choose from - http://www.iccb.org/wcil/courses.html
- Graduate credit from University of Illinois at Springfield is offered for completing the five-day training sessions - http://www.iccb.org/wcil/graduate.html
- Six different World Organization of Webmasters (WOW) certifications (Sunday afternoon) - http://www.iccb.org/wcil/wow.html

Go to http://www.iccb.org/wcil/ for more information about the Institute and also to register. Registration is based on a first come, first served basis.

Teacher workshops

From June through August, the Education Department will convene 14 Teacher-to-Teacher regional workshops for teachers to learn from fellow educators who have had success in raising student achievement. Four will cover the full range of subjects taught in elementary and secondary schools; three are co-sponsored by the National Park Service, dedicated to
math, science and history; four are co-sponsored by TechNet, geared to math and science; two will target the teaching of foreign languages; and one will target the teaching of English as a Second Language. Registration is free and meals/refreshments will be provided during scheduled activities, but participants are responsible for their transportation and lodging. For more information, please go to: https://www.t2tweb.us/Workshops/About.asp. Teachers may be eligible for professional development credits through their school districts or states. To check state requirements, see http://www.paec.org/teacher2teacher/map.html.

Nutrition

Wellness Policy State Agency Grant Plans

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has notified Illinois of its award for the Local Wellness Policy State Agency Grant. The following will be accomplished by September 2007:

- collaborate with the Illinois Action for Healthy Kids to develop and administer a needs assessment on local wellness policy;
- partner with the Illinois extension to provide training for community/parents to raise awareness about children’s health issues and build support for Local Wellness Policies; and
- work with the Regional Offices of Education to provide area training on Local Wellness Policies for school teams.


Team Nutrition Schools in Illinois Tops 1,000

To date, 1027 Illinois schools have enrolled in the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Team Nutrition Initiative since its inception in 1995. These schools have been focusing their attention on the important role nutritious school meals, nutrition education and a health-promoting school environment play in helping students learn to enjoy healthy eating and physical activity.

New Team Nutrition schools will receive a resource kit (while supplies last) of materials to help plan and carry out activities for students and families.

Enrolling is easy. Print and complete the School Enrollment Form, provided as a PDF file, on the USDA Team Nutrition website at http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/team.html. Fax it to 703/305-2549 or mail it to:
Team Nutrition
3101 Park Center Drive, Room 632
Alexandria, VA 22302

Please provide a copy to Joan Love at ISBE at fax: 217/524-6124.

Funding and Disbursement

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announces Midwest Clean Diesel Initiative Grants

The United States Environmental Protection Agency announces The Midwest Clean Diesel Initiative and the availability of almost $1 million in funds for two (2) separate grant programs. These Request for Proposal Announcements are for projects that focus on reducing diesel emissions from the existing fleet of engines. The grant submittal date is June 16, 2006. For more details on the two available grant programs please see the Midwest Clean Diesel website at http://www.epa.gov/midwestcleandiesel/grants/rfp.htm.

Hurricanes Katrina and Rita

Counseling Services available to evacuee students of Katrina and Rita residing in Illinois

The Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health, has received a FEMA approved Health and Human Services grant award to provide a Crisis Counseling Program to evacuees of Katrina and Rita residing in Illinois. The program offers short-term interventions with individuals and groups experiencing psychological reactions to a major disaster and its aftermath. Services are focused on assisting victims and providers in coping with the extraordinary stress caused by the disaster. Basic services include Outreach, Crisis Counseling of Individuals and Groups, Public Education, Information and referral services. Target groups include special populations such as children and their families and consultation to schools.

The program is available to districts that have enrolled evacuees of Katrina and Rita at no cost. For more information, please call 1-800-768-9146.
National organization seeking info on local Katrina relief efforts

RandomKid, a non-profit organization with a mission to help kids help others http://www.randomkid.org/, is asking schools to report the amount of money they raised for Katrina relief. Report your results online at: http://www.randomkid.org/rallyForm/rally.php

For more information contact Anne Ginther at (515)226-3357 office, (612)210-9952 mobile or email anne@randomkid.org.

Federal Grants and Programs

Grant training announced

The Federal Grants and Programs Division at the Illinois State Board of Education announces federal Titles I, II, IV and V trainings for the completion of federal grants.

Training for writing FY07 grants will be conducted via teleconference on May 2, 3, 4 and 5, 2006. To participate in this training complete the registration form at the right and FAX it back by April 28, 2006 to 217-785-9031.

Training for veteran grant writers will be limited to changes and common errors found in prior grants. Training for new grant writers will include a walk through of the NCLB grants. This training is essential for all grant writers.

We look forward to having you join us for one of the teleconferences in May.

If you have not received confirmation of your participation in one of these teleconferences, please contact Amy Eskew at 217-524-4832 or email her at aeskew@isbe.net.
**NCLB Update**

**Equal access to public schools**

The United States Department of Education has issued a final regulation interpreting a provision in the No Child Left Behind Act that guarantees the Boy Scouts and other "patriotic" youth groups "equal access" to public schools that receive federal funding. The regulation states:

- schools may not deny Boy Scout troops the same use of campus meeting space, bulletin boards, information distribution methods and recruiting opportunities that they provide to other outside groups;
- schools' usual campus rules, such as a ban on knives, may be applied to Scout troops;
- schools are not required to sponsor Scout troops; and
- schools may charge fees for use of facilities, as long as they treat the Scouts no less favorably than any other group.


**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/Default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/hr/Default.htm).

**In the News**

**Weekly news clips**