Weekly Message from State Superintendent Randy Dunn

Good afternoon.

I would be remiss if I didn’t take a moment in this week’s opener to send out some thank-yous:

- Thank you to those many of you who were involved by utilizing your own powerful advocacy and influence in getting a budget passed for FY07 that included $415 million additional for Illinois schools. And this is not to mention the Preschool for All program, class size reduction grants, a stronger array of options for school reorganization, funding for teacher and principal mentoring programs, our “Less Red Tape” bill and other good things for kids in this state. I appreciate the leadership of the Governor and the General Assembly on these initiatives (and most of you are aware that Elliot Regenstein, Director of Education Reform, has also been very helpful for us in the Statehouse this spring)—but you also know these good things wouldn’t happen without your support. While I know there is disappointment on not getting movement on the school construction bill yet this spring, we will continue to fan those embers as we come into the fall veto session.

- Thank you for responding in positive fashion to the changes we’ve proposed for 2006 to the Illinois Accountability Workbook (as outlined in the opener for the May 1 Weekly Message). After some initial conversation with the US Department of Education, it is clear we are going to have our work cut out for us—especially around our proposal to take subgroup size to 90—but we feel we have a legitimate argument to make with the feds and will continue to push on this and other areas in our negotiations. I have been heartened by the response I’ve heard from the field over the past week to our proposal.

- Thank you to the individuals who have sent a good word or thought to me as I look at professional opportunities, post-election, to the extent that has kind of played out in the downstate papers. Jim Broadway’s SSNS piece this morning was too kind, but I am appreciative of the similar sentiments I’ve received from good friends these past couple of days.

We’re coming down that glide-path…prom, honors assemblies, concerts, commencement (Kindergarten, 8th-grade and high school)...all that defines this time of a year within a school building. Hang in, this too shall pass!

Have a great week.

Randy Dunn

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Upcoming Deadlines

- 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**
- Call for Workshop Proposals - Partners in Success for New Americans Family – **June 1, 2006**
- High School Challenge: Rigor and Relevance Meet Reality registration – **June 12, 2006**
- Proposed Public School Calendar – **June 15, 2006**
- Midwest Clean Diesel Initiative Grant Deadlines – **June 16, 2006**
- Rules Public Comment – **June 19, 2006**
- National High School Journalism Teacher Awards applications – **July 1, 2006**
- Waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in November – **August 11, 2006**
- Public Comment on Special Education Rulemaking – **September 15, 2006**

Governmental Relations and Budget

Spring Session Update

The General Assembly finished its business on Thursday, May 4. One of the final actions taken up by the General Assembly was passing the FY 2007 budget. Education saw more than a $400 million increase in funding. This includes a $170 per pupil increase to the foundation level, increased funds for agricultural education, career and technical education, early childhood, bilingual education, arts and foreign language, etc. New programs were also established for a teacher mentoring pilot project, bullying prevention, principal mentoring and more. Mandated Categorical Grants in FY 07 will hold steady at the same proration rate as in FY 06. The final FY 2007 ISBE budget is posted online at: http://www.isbe.net/budget/FY07/FY07_final_budget.pdf


A list of all education-related bills that passed both chambers will be updated by 5 p.m. Tuesday, May 9, at http://www.isbe.net/gov_relations/default.htm. A bill does not become law until signed by the Governor and given a Public Act number. As bills are signed or vetoed, the information will be updated on the Governmental Relations page on the website and districts will also be updated via the Weekly Message.

For additional information, contact Nicole Wills or Josh Jacobs in ISBE’s Governmental Relations Division at 217-782-6510.

School Business and Support

School District/Joint Agreement Budget Forms available

The 2006-2007 School District/Joint Agreement Budget Forms (ISBE Form 50-36/50-39) along with additional information and instructions are online at: http://www.isbe.net/sfms/budget/2007/budget.htm

This web page briefly explains two new laws going into effect July 1, 2006.

1. PA 94-0234 requires school districts to electronically submit the annual budget to ISBE; and also requires school districts who adopt an unbalanced budget in the operating funds to complete a Deficit Reduction Plan to balance the budget within three years.

2. PA 94-0714 requires school districts to complete a Report of Vendors Contracts of $1,000 or more.

Instructions to submit budgets electronically, complete a Deficit Reduction Plan if required and report vendor contracts of $1,000 or more are found in Instructions for FY 2007 Budget and Mechanics of a School District Budget.

If you have any questions concerning the budget forms or the new laws, please contact the School Business and Support Services Division at 217-785-8779.
PA 94-0234 requires school districts to submit balanced budgets

Correction to April 10 Weekly Message article

PA 94-0234 which becomes in effect July 2006 requires school districts to submit their FY 2007 budget to the Illinois State Board of Education within or before the first quarter of each fiscal year (September 30, 2006). School District will submit their budgets in the same manner that they submit their Annual Financial Reports. The 2006-2007 School District/Joint Agreement Budget Instruction Booklet includes detailed instructions for district personnel to follow when transmitting budgets electronically to the State Board. The booklet is online at http://www.isbe.net/sfms/budget/2007/budget.htm and on the School Business and Support Services homepage.

PA 94-0234 requires school district budgets to be balanced. The definition and calculation of balanced budgets is incorporated within the budget forms ISBE prescribes for school districts. The budget forms are also being finalized for FY 2007 and will be located at the School Business and Support Services homepage or http://www.isbe.net/sfms/budget/2007/budget.htm.

Balanced budget is determined by comparing the expenditures versus the revenues for the for the aggregate of the four operating funds—Educational, Operation and Maintenance, Transportation and Working Cash. If the revenues are equal to or greater than the expenditures, the budget is balanced. If the expenditures are greater than the revenues, the ending fund balance for the aggregate four funds will be divided by three and compared to the aggregate amount of the deficit of the four operating funds. If the deficit is greater than three times the ending fund balance, the district will be required to complete a deficit reduction plan. The deficit reduction plan will also be included in the budget form.

Example

If the aggregate expenditures exceed the aggregate revenues for the Educational, Operations and Maintenance, Pupil Transportation and Working cash fund by $100,000 then the aggregate ending fund balance for the same funds must be $300,000 or greater or the district will be required to file a deficit reduction plan.

Rules

One additional rulemaking recently adopted by the State Board of Education is now in effect. These rules 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.

Part 401 (Special Education Facilities Under Section 14-7.02 of the School Code)

Comprehensive updating.

Affected Sections: All

Effective Date: April 25, 2006

Student Assessment

Thank you!

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Assessment and Data Analysis Divisions thank the district and school staff for their work in the clean up process for assessment data. Over 350 districts had no errors in their files when sent to the testing contractors on Saturday morning. More than 500 districts had fewer than five errors. This reflects the hard work and diligence that districts put into assuring that their data are accurate and current. There will be another opportunity to make corrections in June.

New Illinois Alternate Assessment development process to begin

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has announced the start of the development process for the new Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA). ISBE’s contractor, Pearson Educational Measurement, will work closely with ISBE staff and Illinois educators to design, develop and pilot the new assessment. The new IAA will be operational for the 2007-08 school year.

The new IAA is being developed in response to requests from the field that teachers want a test format other than portfolio in place to assess students who are significantly cognitively disabled. For 2006-07, the Illinois Alternate Assessment portfolio will still be in place. ISBE’s current contractor, Measured Progress, will continue to provide training and materials regarding the portfolio process.

Under the new IAA, writing will be piloted in grades 3, 5, 6, 8 and 11 in Fall 2006. The writing test will be
operational in spring 2007 for grades 5, 8 and 11. Writing does not count toward Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Key dates for the new assessment include:
- **September 18-22, 2006**: educator training in writing for new IAA at locations statewide
- **October 16-20, 2006**: field test new IAA in writing statewide in grades 3, 5, 6, 8, 11
- **Spring 2007**: field test new IAA in reading, math, science statewide in appropriate grades
- **Spring 2007**: census test in writing in grades 5, 8, 11

Benefits of the new IAA include:
- minimal disruption to instructional time;
- NCLB compliance;
- events-based, shorter testing window;
- linked to Illinois Learning Standards and IEP;
- instructionally beneficial score reports for schools and families;
- professional development opportunities -Webinar (online seminar) and Q and A session; and
- optional online assessment.

For more information contact the Division of Student Assessment at 217-782-4823 or by email at mleveque@isbe.net.

**Professional Development**

**Arts Workshop planned**

*The Illinois Alliance for Arts Education and “Festival 56” in Princeton, Illinois will present *Arts Alive in the Classroom* on July 25 and 26. The four fine arts disciplines of music, drama, dance, and the visual arts will be integrated into hands-on sessions, panel discussions, and live theater performances.*

Lesson plans, advocacy strategies, arts promotion ideas, and instructional strategies especially applicable to the special needs student will also be included. For conference registration or further information, contact **Barbara Heimerdinger** at 8157756-7615 or by e-mail at barbarah@tbcnet.com.

**High school conference dates set**

Make plans now to attend *High School Challenge: Rigor and Relevance Meet Reality* June 19 and 20 in Bloomington, Illinois. The conference is designed to create awareness of the changing global economy and the need to prepare Illinois students for the world in which they will live and work.

Featured speakers will include:

- **Willard Daggett**, President, International Center for Leadership in Education
- **Kati Haycock**, Director, The Education Trust
- **Edward Rust**, Chairman and CEO, State Farm Insurance
- **Craig Dennon** – High School Turn Around Specialist
- **William Martin** – High School English Department Chair, Turn Around High School
- **Harvey Smith** – Director, Northern Illinois University Social Science Research Institute
- **Ralph Martire** – Executive Director, Center for Tax and Budget Accountability

The conference registration form is available at: [http://www.ilprincipals.org/PDF/High_School_Challenge_for_web.pdf](http://www.ilprincipals.org/PDF/High_School_Challenge_for_web.pdf)

Registration deadline is June 12, 2006.


**CASEL to offer two-day training**

As districts and schools work to help their students meet the new Social Emotional Learning Standards, many are looking for professional development supports. CASEL—the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning, based at the University of Illinois at Chicago—is offering a two-day training for school teams on how to implement and sustain school wide SEL.

The training is research-based and requires school teams of at least four, including the principal or another senior administrator, a student support person (e.g., counselor, social worker, school psychologist) and a curriculum person (e.g., teacher or area head). For more information, go to [http://www.casel.org/home/index.php](http://www.casel.org/home/index.php).

**Data Analysis**

**2006 Teacher Salary Study available online**

The 2005-06 Teacher Salary Study is available online at: [http://www.isbe.net/research/htmls/supply_and_demand.htm#ts](http://www.isbe.net/research/htmls/supply_and_demand.htm#ts).
**Funding and Disbursement**

**FY 2006 State and Federal grant amendments and project extension requests**

Many State and Federal grant projects are approaching a June 30 end date for obligating FY 2006 grant funds. Please be advised that per ISBE fiscal policy, all State and Federal project **end date extension** requests and **final budget amendments** must be received in the agency no later than 30 calendar days prior to the end date of the project. For grant applications in the electronic Grants Management System (eGMS), the deadline is also referenced on the Program Overview page under “Amendment Due Date”.

For a current and complete reference of all ISBE fiscal policies and general grant procedures please refer to the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures located at [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/fiscal_procedure_handbk.pdf)

**FY 2006 Transition Assistance**

The FY 2006 Transition Assistance payment has been calculated and vouchered. School districts automatically qualify for the payment if their FY 2006 payments were less than their FY 2005 payments in specified programs. For FY 2006 these specified programs include: Special Education (excluding Orphanage), State Free Lunch/Breakfast Program, Transportation, Bilingual Education, Career and Technical Education, Early Childhood, ADA Block Grant, Agriculture Education, Truants Alternative and Optional Education and Fast Growth Grant (eliminated in FY 2006). Qualifying school districts and details of the FY 2006 calculations can be accessed at: [http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/transition_assistance_calculations.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/transition_assistance_calculations.pdf)

Please direct questions regarding the calculations to **Toni Waggoner** at 217-782-0249.

**Nutrition and Support**

**Important reminder—Local Wellness Policy**

*Where is your district in the stages of the wellness policy development?*

**Background**

As mandated by the Child Nutrition and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Reauthorization Act of 2004, a local wellness policy must be in place by the first day of the 2006–2007 school year. Recognizing the role schools can play in health promotion, the law requires local education agencies participating in a program authorized by the National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 to develop a local wellness policy with the objectives of improving the school nutrition environment, promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity (PL 108-265, Section 204) by the beginning of the 2006–2007 school year. In addition, Public Act 094-0199 requires the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to establish a State goal that all districts have a local wellness policy.

To assist districts, ISBE and the Illinois Nutrition Education and Training (NET) Program, provided a model local wellness policy tool kit to superintendents in late winter.

Briefly, the steps to develop a policy include the following:

- District Assessment
- Identify Challenge
- Identify Partners
- Develop Your Plan
- Implement the Policy
- Evaluate Results

The following websites provide useful tools and resources to help you with this requirement:

Illinois contact information is:
- The Common Ground
  Phone – 1-847-213-0296
  Email – letsmediate@aol.com

National Contact information:
- Phone – 1-800-260-0218

**Support Services**

**Support to children of military personnel**

The Illinois Chapter of the National Military Family Association in Illinois is concerned with the well-being of the children of deployed military personnel who face pressures and may require special attention by school staff. The organization would be pleased to assist schools to help students in this situation.

Illinois contact information is:
- The Common Ground
  Phone – 1-847-213-0296
  Email – letsmediate@aol.com

NATIONAL MILITARY FAMILY ASSOCIATION

Illinois Nutrition Education and Training—
http://www.kidseatwell.org/LocalWellnessPolicy.html

School Nutrition Association—
http://www.schoolnutrition.org/

Action for Healthy Kids—
http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/

USDA Food and Nutrition Service, PowerPoint presentation, *Welcome to Wellness: Putting School Nutrition Legislation Into Practice*—
http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/welcometowellness.ppt

Illinois NET Program staff in cooperation with the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools (IARSS) has been providing Regional Local Wellness Policy Trainings to school district teams since March. Visit http://www.kidseatwell.org/ to schedule or register for training.

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**Student Opportunities and Honors**

**State Student Advisory Council seeks members**

The Illinois State Board of Education is currently seeking applications for the Student Advisory Council (SAC) to the Illinois State Board of Education for the 2006-07 school year.

The SAC is made up of students representing all regions of the state. Members are invited to attend Board meetings, sessions of the General Assembly and applicable education-related conferences. They may review and critique ISBE’s existing or proposed programs, policies and regulations, sponsor cooperatively with the ISBE conferences, seminars, etc., pertaining to student-related, education issues, inform Illinois students of SAC activities and provide testimony at legislative or board hearings.

Eligibility to apply for the 2006-2007 SAC is limited to public school students. Given the need to hear from students on some of the more complicated issues faced by our state, special consideration will be given to applicants from low-performing schools or districts. An application form, due June 7, 2006 is now available at: http://www.isbe.net/pdf/sac_application.pdf

Activities of the Student Advisory Council in 2006-2007 are contingent upon final State Board budget allocations.

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**Niles Township High School District 219 named 2006 Winner of Sylvia Charp Award for District Innovation in Technology**

T.H.E. Journal and the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE®) have named Niles Township High School District 219 in Skokie the recipient of the third annual Sylvia Charp District Award in honor of the late Dr. Sylvia Charp. Dr. Charp was the founding editor-in-chief of T.H.E. Journal and was an ardent, lifelong supporter of ISTE and its mission.

The Charp Award recognizes school districts that exhibit effectiveness and innovation in applying technology district-wide. Criteria for the award include:

- consistent district effectiveness;
- use of ISTE's National Educational Technology Standards and Essential Conditions (NETS) or a local or statewide derivative of those standards;
- effective and innovative implementation of technology; and
- a commitment to share technology information with other districts.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) is a nonprofit membership organization providing leadership and service to improve teaching and learning by advancing the effective use of technology in PK-12 and teacher education. Visit http://www.iste.org or call 800-336-5191 to learn more about ISTE.

**Illinois students win national culinary title**

A five student team from the Technology Center of DuPage has won the Fifth Annual National ProStart Student Invitational (NPSI). The team competed against 31 qualifying teams from across the country to win the national title.

The winning students included Shawn Finnen, Jennifer Henske and Frank Vasquez all of Carol Stream; Meg Sisk of Lombard and Matt DuBois of Woodridge. Each student won a full tuition scholarship to attend the New England Culinary Institute and more than $33,000 each in scholarships to pursue post-secondary education in foodservice and hospitality.

To qualify for the national competition, students first had to win the Illinois ProStart Student Invitational, which was hosted by the IRAEF last October at Kendall College. Nearly 300 industry professionals, students and chef judges were in attendance to watch over 100 ProStart students from 24 teams across the state compete...
in three competitions. These events showcased their skills in the kitchen and what they have learned from the IRAEF sponsored Illinois ProStart School-to-Career program. TCD earned its bid to compete in the National ProStart Student Invitational by placing first in the culinary competition and being the top overall scoring team at the Illinois ProStart Student Invitational.

To learn more about the IRAEF or ProStart program, please visit [http://weareprostart.org/](http://weareprostart.org/) or call 800-572-1086, extension 147 or 312-715-6741.

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

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**In the News**

**Weekly news clips**

Highlights from last week’s education news clips are posted at: [http://www.isbe.net/news/2006/newsclips/060505.htm](http://www.isbe.net/news/2006/newsclips/060505.htm)

**Memoriam – Berardo J. DeSimone, Sr.**

Berardo "Dee" J. DeSimone Sr., 80, of Elmhurst, passed away on April 29, 2006. His educational career began in the Chicago Public School System. He went on to Berkeley School District #87, where he held the positions of coach, counselor, teacher, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, business manager and superintendent. After leaving District #87, he was employed by the Illinois State Board of Education. Upon his departure from ISBE, DeSimone was with the Regional Office of Education for DuPage County for 27 years, 19 years of which he served as the Regional Superintendent of Schools. For more than 60 years, his lifelong passion and devotion was to the education of children in Illinois.