Good afternoon,

Last week was a very busy one, as I got out on the road and met with many of our colleagues. I want to say thank you to everyone in Bloomington, Moline, Rock Island and Mt. Vernon that welcomed me, and I look forward to getting out and about to meet many more of you.

Part of my job is to get out of Springfield and meet with local educators throughout Illinois and listen to them, finding out what works and what doesn’t. It’s also important that I get out and let you know what’s going on at a statewide level that will impact your schools.

On Thursday, I had the opportunity to meet with teachers and administrators from southern Illinois at the Illinois ASPIRE South end-of-year conference. An ISBE-funded initiative, Illinois ASPIRE, Alliance for School-based Problem-solving & Intervention Resources in Education, is a regional system of professional development that increases the capacity of schools to provide early intervening services to at-risk students and students with disabilities. Illinois ASPIRE South is one of four ASPIRE regions and throughout the past year has provided training and technical assistance to approximately 350 educators from 85 southern Illinois school districts dedicated to working together to help their students show gains toward making adequate yearly progress and improve their educational outcomes overall.

I know many of us are concerned about No Child Left Behind and what it means for schools and districts that do not make AYP based solely on the test performance of their special education subgroup. I think these are valid concerns, and rest assured we’re working with national organizations to get more flexibility as it is debated, such as growth models. But I also know that NCLB has meant great things for students with disabilities, as it is revolutionizing how we look at special education, including the importance of setting high expectations for all learners, and how we teach and assess all students. To that end, high quality instruction for all students, frequent monitoring of student progress through such mechanisms as curriculum based measures, and supplementing instruction to intervene early with struggling learners are all critical components and are integral to Illinois ASPIRE.

You should also know that here at the state level we’re taking a new look at special education as well, not only with initiatives such as Illinois ASPIRE that focus on intervention and prevention, but also in funding. When the State Board proposed its budget, it called for fully funding mandated categoricals, as well as increasing the personnel reimbursement for special education. Governor Blagojevich’s Helping Kids Learn calls for increasing reimbursement by nearly 65%, an increase in this formula for the first time since 1985.
This is an exciting time in education, a time for change. I’m proud to be the superintendent as we meet these challenges head on and work together to improve, not just student performance, but our students’ lives.

Have a great week!

Chris Koch

Upcoming Deadlines

- **Truants’ Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) Professional Development RFP** – May 31, 2007
- ‘**Teacher Service Record**’ salary submission – June 15, 2007
- **Student applications for 2007-2008 Student Advisory Council** – June 15, 2007
- **Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report** – June 30, 2007
- **Waiver applications to be considered by the General Assembly in Fall 2007** – August 10, 2007

English Language Learning

**FY08 Consolidated Application to Serve English Language Learners (ELLS)**

*Now Available on the ISBE English Language Learning Web Site*

The FY08 Consolidated Application to Serve English Language Learners is now available for districts to download on the ISBE English Language Learning website at: [http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/consolidated_application.htm](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/consolidated_application.htm).

The application is used to request both state Transitional Bilingual Education/Transitional Program of Instruction (TBE/TPI) and federal Title III Immigrant Education Program (IEP) and Language Instruction Program for Limited English Proficient Students (LIPLEPS) funding. Districts should note that this application is not currently part of the e-grant/IWAS system.

Districts are eligible to complete the short version of the application if they have:

- fewer than 20 ELL students and are seeking state TPI funds only, or
- have fewer than 20 ELL students and are seeking program approval only and no funding.

To be considered for federal Title III funding, the application must be mailed to the ISBE Chicago Office with a postmark no later than June 30, 2007. Applications submitted after that date will be considered for state TBE/TPI funding only, and the TBE/TPI funding award ceiling may be reduced based on the date the application is received.

Districts seeking assistance in completing this application are encouraged to visit the website listed above for more details or to call the Division of English Language Learning at 312-814-3850.

Funding & Disbursements

**Clarification of Core Functions of Administrative Districts Acting as Fiscal Agents for Joint Applications or Cooperatives/Joint Agreements**

Revisions to the [State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/consolidated_application.htm) have been made to incorporate clarification of the core functions of administrative districts when they are in the role of fiscal agents.

Administrative districts are normally school districts that are chosen and approved by the joint applicants or the governing board of the cooperative/joint agreement. In some cases, Regional Offices of Education have been designated as the administrative and fiscal agent. The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) recognizes the
administrative district as the fiscal and legal agent for the joint application or cooperative/joint agreement.

The updated guidance can be found at http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/core.pdf and defines the core functions and duties for administrative districts appointed as the fiscal agent on behalf of joint applicants, cooperatives, and joint agreements. There may be additional requirements for the designated fiscal agent based on individual program rules or regulations.

**FY 2007 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 2007 grant funds. Please be advised that per Policy Statements #2 and #3 on page 3 of the State and Federal Grant Administration Policy and Fiscal Requirements and Procedures, 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.

Final amendments for federal or state funded grants with a Project End Date of June 30, 2007, must be received by ISBE no later than May 31, 2007. For those grants with a Project End Date of August 31, 2007, the last day amendments will be accepted is August 1, 2007. Budget increases for state funded grant projects must be received by June 30, even if the project end date has been extended. For grant applications in the electronic Grants Management System (eGMS), the deadline is also referenced on the Program Overview page under “Amendment Due Date”.

**Nutrition**

**Developing a Food Safety Program**

School food authorities (SFAs) are required to have a food safety program based on Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) principals for the preparation and service of school meals served to children. Developing a Food Safety Program is the focus for this year’s administrative workshops. The administrative workshops will be held at seven sites in June.

Please visit our website at: http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/workshops.htm and scroll to NSLP Workshops to register for the Developing a Food Safety Program

A complimentary lunch will be provided. Space is limited for the Developing a Food Safety Program, so please register only one representative from your school food authority.

Registration begins at 8 a.m. and the workshops end at 4:30 p.m. For more information, contact ISBE’s Nutrition Division at 800-545-7892 or 217-782-2491.

**Offering Recess before Lunch Research**

As schools evaluate their Local Wellness Policies, one easy procedure to consider for improving student’s eating habits is to offer recess before lunch. The Action for Healthy Kids® website contains numerous resources reiterating the numerous benefits of this kind of school day scheduling. The benefits include:

- Improved cafeteria atmosphere
- Less supervision in the cafeteria
- Fewer classroom discipline problems, after lunch
- Increase in classroom time on-task
- Increased milk, vegetable, and entrée consumption
- Decreased number of nurse visits for stomach aches after recess

To read more about recess before lunch, visit the Action for Healthy Kids® website, reference pages on RECESS at http://www.actionforhealthykids.org/resources_search.php?frmAction=search&term=recess&submit.x=32&submit.y=11.

**Teaching and Learning**

**Invitation to participate in National Essential Skills Study online**

All Illinois educators and citizens are encouraged to participate in the National Essential Skills Study (NESS), which is designed to identify the most essential skills and knowledge in the core areas of English, mathematics, science and social studies for high school students.

The International Center for Leadership in Education, headed by Dr. Willard Daggett, is conducting the survey. Survey results are designed to help high schools address
You are encouraged to participate in the NESS prior to June 1. Dr. Daggett will report on preliminary national and Illinois results during The High School Challenge Conference June 14 & 15 in Bloomington, Illinois.

Registration information for the conference is available online at: http://www.nca.uillinois.edu/ProfDev/HSChallenge.pdf.

Each of the core area surveys takes about 20 minutes and you are encouraged to participate in all of the core area surveys. Please encourage parents and community members to participate as well.

To learn more about the NESS—and to participate—please visit: http://www.leadered.com. Directions are on the web site.

Data Analysis & Progress Reporting

2006-2007 Dental Data Collection

The Dental Data Collection system will be opened for data entry from May 16, 2007 through June 30, 2007. The data must be submitted online using IWAS.

Links for important forms and other information are listed below:

School Dental Examinations-Information Sheet
http://www.isbe.net/research/pdfs/dental_information.pdf

IDPH Proof of School Dental Examination Form
http://www.idph.state.il.us/HealthWellness/oralhlth/DentalExamProof.pdf

IDPH Dental Examination Waiver Form
http://www.idph.state.il.us/forms/ohpm/Dental%20Exam%20Waiver.pdf

Dental Information-Data Entry Worksheet
http://www.isbe.net/research/xls/dental_worksheet.xls

If you are unable to open the links from this message, please copy the address to the address bar of a browser window (Internet Explorer or Netscape) and hit the “Enter” button. Please share this information with the school nurse or health technician and those submitting the dental data to the Illinois State Board of Education.

Questions may be addressed to Mr. Shafiquil Azam at 217-782-3950 or mazam@isbe.net.

Teacher Resources

Illinois Middle Schools invited to celebrate Illinois Arts Week 2007

The Illinois Arts Council is inviting all Illinois middle schools to participate in a free celebration project for Illinois Arts Week 2007, which is Oct. 7-13, 2007.

The company that manufactures GelGems Window Clings has offered to provide a kit of the material to participating middle schools. This medium is for use in constructing a mosaic for school windows to be displayed during Illinois Arts Week 2007.

At the end of the week, all participating schools that photograph their murals will be entered in a random drawing for a $250 Dick Blick Art Materials Gift Certificate.

For more information or to sign-up for participation, visit the IAC’s web site at: http://www.state.il.us/agency/iac/. The deadline to sign-up is Wednesday, May 30. The kits will be mailed in early August.

Professional Development

Illinois Agricultural Education/FFA School Officials’ Workshop and Luncheon June 14

The 5th Annual FFA School Officials’ Luncheon and Workshop at the Illinois FFA Convention will be held in Springfield from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday, June 14, at the Prairie Capitol Convention Center in Springfield. The workshop – which will focus on agricultural education – is designed for educators, administrators, curriculum coordinators, board members.

More information is available online at: www.agriculturaleducation.org. For questions or to register, contact Julie McCleary at 309-584-4311 or via e-mail at: jmccleary@agriculturaleducation.org.

The registration deadline is Friday, June 1.

Student Opportunities
**State Student Advisory Council seeks members**

ISBE is currently seeking applications for the Student Advisory Council to the Illinois State Board of Education for the 2007-08 school year. Applications are due **Friday, June 15.**

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.

Eligibility to apply for the 2007-2008 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 15,** and more information are available online at: [http://www.isbe.net/SAC/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/SAC/default.htm).

For more information, contact Andrea Wingo at 217-782-2223 or awingo@isbe.net.

**Employment Opportunities**

**ISBE 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**