Weekly Message from State Superintendent Randy Dunn

Good afternoon.

Last week the State Board authorized moving forward with a revised contractual approach for the ISAT and the PSAE in 2007. The approach focuses on keeping what worked well with Harcourt (test design) while making changes to what went wrong (processing and production). In short, we’ll continue to work with Harcourt, but, on test development only. We’ll transfer ISAT processing and production to a new contractor and we’ll transfer all PSAE responsibilities over to ACT. We were glad to receive letters of support for this approach from LUDA, IASBO, IASA, IPA and ED-RED.

When I was giving my testimony to the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee on the Harcourt fiasco a few weeks ago, one of the things I promised the Committee I would do is to ensure that the Illinois State Board of Education made clear the process for appeal of the AYP designation coming out of this spring’s assessment.

School districts may appeal their district or school status to the Illinois State Board of Education. A letter from the district superintendent to me, as State Superintendent, for consideration by our Appeals Advisory Committee, listing the issue and rationale for the appeal, begins the process. There is no ISBE form nor letter template for this; rather, you cite the reason(s) and give background to support the claim.

Do be aware of timelines for this process: A district must submit its appeal within 30 days after receipt of state notification of AYP status from ISBE or by September 1, whichever occurs later.

Once we receive an appeal request at ISBE, we always try to first work through a resolution informally. We’ll provide an opportunity for the district to meet with State Board staff (either in person or over the telephone) in an effort to sort out the issues and to see if we can get it resolved without a hearing. An informal review of any materials can also occur by ISBE staff, working closely with our appeals coordinator—who has been Gail Lieberman, to ensure any technical errors are addressed. If things remain unresolved after this process, then the appeal will be scheduled for a formal hearing with the Appeals Advisory Committee.

A bit later on in this edition of the *Weekly*, you will find details on the hearing process itself and some contact information if you have any questions. We remain confident that our statewide results will not be negatively impacted by our problems with test distribution, but I also want to ensure that every district—especially this year—understands how the appeal process works.

I will be working from the Chicago office for the remainder of this week and look forward to the Governor’s major education announcement at Healy Elementary School in Chicago tomorrow afternoon.

Have a great week.

Randy Dunn
**Upcoming Deadlines**

- Public Comment Deadline – Part 1500 – School Emergency and Crisis Response Plans – **May 22, 2006**
- Invoices for District Costs related to ISAT Delays – **May 26, 2007**
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs Art Contest – **May 31, 2006**
- Call for Workshop Proposals - Partners in Success for New Americans Family – **June 1, 2006**
- One Percent Cap Applications – **June 1, 2006**
- Student Advisory Council Applications – **June 7, 2006**
- High School Challenge: Rigor and Relevance Meet Reality registration – **June 12, 2006**
- Proposed Public School Calendar – **June 15, 2006**
- Aramco Teachers to Saudi Arabia application – **June 15, 2006**
- Midwest Clean Diesel Initiative Grant applications – **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**

**NCLB**

**AYP Appeals Process**

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**Student Assessment**

**District costs related to ISAT delays**

Invoices for district costs related to the Harcourt ISAT delivery delays are due Friday, May 26, 2007 to Dorie Konneker, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777. Please provide detail of the expenses incurred.

**Data Analysis**

**School Report Card Data Form now online**

The report card data collection form is now available on IWAS. The deadline for data submission is June 15, 2006. You are advised to print a copy of the data form before you exit the verification process. Among the statistics generated during the verification process are attendance rates and graduation rates which will be used in the AYP computations for schools and districts. The targets for making AYP in 2006 are: 89 percent for attendance rate; and 69 percent for graduation rate.

Please call 217-558-3600 with IWAS access questions and 217-782-3950 for other report card issues.

**Grants**

Recently the U.S. Department of Education (USED) published a notice inviting applications for grants under the Smaller Learning Communities program. Implementing or improving career academies is one of the most popular uses of funds. Information about the competition is available at: [http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppId=9223&mode=VIEW](http://www.grants.gov/search/search.do?oppId=9223&mode=VIEW).

In addition, the USED is holding three bidders’ conferences for prospective applicants in Arlington, Virginia, Kansas City, Missouri and Phoenix, Arizona. Information about these events can be found here: [http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sslc/announcements.shtml](http://www.nwrel.org/scpd/sslc/announcements.shtml).

**Special Education**

**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.
Applications are due Thursday, June 1, 2006. The form may be mailed or FAXED to 217-782-0372, attention, **Pearl Schneider**.


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

### Teacher Certification

#### NBPTS applications

The deadline for submitting a sealed proposal for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS) program has been extended two weeks and is now due at ISBE by 4:00 PM on June 5, 2006. The Request for Sealed Proposal (RFSP) may be accessed online at: [http://www.purchase.state.il.us/ipb/IllinoisBID.nsf/frmBidViewFrameset?ReadForm&view=viewSolicitationsOpenByDate?OpenView&Start=1&Count=250](http://www.purchase.state.il.us/ipb/IllinoisBID.nsf/frmBidViewFrameset?ReadForm&view=viewSolicitationsOpenByDate?OpenView&Start=1&Count=250)

It is number 22010076.

### English Language Learning

#### English Language Proficiency Assessment

Prior to FY 06, Illinois used four state-approved nationally normed English language proficiency tests (LAS, MAC II, IPT and LPTS). A student who scored at or above the 50th percentile on the nationally normed test used by its district was eligible to exit the program as English language proficient.

In FY06, Illinois instituted the use of [ACCESS for ELLs™](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/access.htm), a criterion-based assessment aligned to Illinois Learning Standards as its new, statewide test of English language proficiency. The state has determined that a score of 4.0 is English language proficient. At this level, English language learners can process, understand, produce or use:

- specific and some technical language of the content areas;
- a variety of sentence lengths of varying linguistic complexity in oral discourse or multiple, related paragraphs; and
- oral or written language with minimal phonological, syntactic or semantic errors that do not impede the overall meaning of the communication when presented with oral or written connected discourse with occasional visual and graphic support.

Any student scoring below 4.0 is deemed to be an English language learner and is eligible for placement in a Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI). It is recommended that districts use this assessment along with other multiple indicators of English language learning to determine placement.

For more information about ACCESS for ELLs™, see [http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/access.htm](http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/access.htm).

For more information about the rules governing transitional bilingual education, see [http://www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm](http://www.isbe.net/rules/proposed/default.htm).

### Professional Development

#### High school conference dates set

Make plans now to attend High School Challenge: Rigor and Relevance Meet Reality Jun 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.

Accountability

Child Vision and Hearing Test Act

410 ILCS (205/3 and 205/6)
Reference 105 ILCS 27-8.1

Vision and hearing screening services shall be administered to all children as early as possible, but no later than their first year in any public or private education program, licensed day care center or residential facility for handicapped children.

No child shall be required to submit to any test required by this Act if a parent or guardian of the child objects on constitutional grounds and submits a written statement of such objection to the agency administering such vision and hearing screening services.

Frequency of Screening--Hearing (see 23 Ill. Admin. Code 675.110)

Hearing screening services shall be provided annually for all preschool children three years of age or older in any public or private educational program or licensed child care facility.

Hearing screening services shall be provided annually for all school age children who are in grades K, 1, 2 and 3; are in any special education class; have been referred by a teacher; or are transfer students; these screening services shall be proved in all public, private and parochial schools.

In lieu of the screening services required, a completed and signed report form indicating that an eye examination by an M.D. specializing in diseases of the eye or a licensed optometrist has been administered within the previous 12 months is acceptable.

The parent or legal guardian of a student may object to vision screening tests for their child on religious grounds.

Individuals conducting vision screening tests shall give a child’s parent or guardian written notification, before the vision screening is conducted, that states, “Vision screening is not a substitute for a complete eye and vision evaluation by an eye doctor. Your child is not required to undergo this vision screening if an optometrist or ophthalmologist has completed and signed a report form indicating that an examination has been administered within the previous 12 months.” 105 ILCS 27-8.1

Please contact Sheila McCurley, Illinois Department of Public Health at 217-782-4733 with questions.

Nutrition

Think Summer!

With the warmer temperatures finally upon us, schools will be out soon and images of summer activities begin to flood our thoughts. However, for some children, no school means no food. But wait—there may be help close by! Does your city operate a Summer Food Service Program? The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was instituted to provide nutritious meals to children during the summer months when school is not in session. The program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and administered by the Illinois State Board of Education.

To find the SFSP site closest to you, go to [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/), scroll down and click on the big yellow button that says Summer Food Service Program and then click on Illinois Nutrition Programs Interactive Map. You can search this map by either county or zip code for the closest program site and take your children there for a nutritious meal.
Other ways to participate in the Summer Food Service Program:

- Become a sponsor
- Run a site
- Be a vendor
- Volunteer

If you have any questions regarding the Summer Food Service Program, contact Amy Bianco at the Nutrition Programs Division of the Illinois State Board of Education at 800-545-7892 or email abianco@isbe.net.

Plan now for School Year 2007 Special Events

As you prepare for SY07 activities, plan to include the following special events.

- National School Lunch Week (NSLW), Vote for School Lunch, October 9–13, 2006, since 1962
- Illinois School Breakfast Week (ISBW), November 13–19, 2006, since 1989
- National School Breakfast Week (NSBW), A World of School Breakfasts, March 5–9, 2007, reference the April issue of School Foodservice & Nutrition Journal (pages 49–61)
- Child Nutrition Week, first week in May, approximately 15 years old. Reference the April issue (pages 25–37) of the School Foodservice & Nutrition Journal or online at http://www.schoolnutrition.org/.

Action for Healthy Kids Website Releases Findings on Illinois Grant Study


Other reports available online include:

- An Action for Healthy Kids Report: Parents’ Views on School Wellness Practices
- The Learning Connection: The Value of Improving Nutrition and Physical Activity in Our Schools

This national site offers information on events, programs, reports, a newsmroom link and resources to improve school environments.

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.

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.

In the News

Weekly news clips

Highlights from last week’s education news clips are posted at: