Editor’s Note: In the absence of pressing information to share, we had not planned on sending a Weekly Message this week. However, a few time-sensitive items have emerged which we are sharing with you here. We’ll return next week with the traditional format.

Upcoming Deadlines

- Consolidated Application to Serve English Language Learners – June 30, 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
- Grow Your Own Teacher Education Initiative Grants – Through March 1, 2007

English Language Learning

Consolidated Application due June 30

The Fiscal Year (FY) 07 Consolidated Application to Serve English Language Learners is available online at: http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/consolidated_application.htm. The application deadline is June 30, 2006.

Professional Development

Superintendents’ Conference registration now open

Registration for the Twenty-Ninth Annual Superintendents’ Conference is now open. The registration brochure will be mailed to superintendents this week and is also posted online at http://www.isbe.net/supts_conf/Default.htm. For conference questions, please call 217-782-6434; if you have breakout session ideas, please e-mail them to Leigh Ann Smith at lsmith@isbe.net.

Grants

Grow Your Own teacher education initiative grants available

Approximately $2,250,000 is available for Grow Your Own teacher education initiative implementation projects with a maximum grant award of approximately $200,000 per recipient. Eligible applicants are consortia whose membership includes at least one four-year, accredited institution of higher education with an approved teacher education program, at least one school district or group of schools and at least one community organization. Membership in a consortium by additional four-year institutions, schools and community organizations, as well as by two-year institutions of higher education or school employees’ unions, is optional.

For purposes of this RFP, an eligible “community organization” is a nonprofit organization that has a demonstrated capacity to train, develop and organize parents and community leaders into a constituency that will hold the school and the school district accountable for achieving high academic standards. In addition to organizations with a geographic focus, “community organization” includes general parent organizations, organizations of special education or bilingual education parents and school employee unions.

The grant period will begin no sooner than July 1, 2006 and will extend from the execution date of the grant through June 30, 2007. Applications should be submitted now for activities planned within this fiscal year. Funding in the subsequent years will be contingent upon a sufficient appropriation for the program and satisfactory progress in the preceding grant period.

Applications will be accepted anytime but no later than March 1, 2007 or until all funds have been awarded.

Mail the original and four copies to the attention of Linda Jamali, Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, S-306, Springfield, Illinois 62777-0001. The application is available online at: http://www.isbe.net/certification/pdf/rfp_gyo.pdf.