Good afternoon.

It is with some bittersweet feeling that I write this final Weekly Message opener as State Superintendent. This is my last one—though I will be working here in the Springfield office next Monday, things are suggesting the day will be fairly hectic. Then, on Monday the 27th, I will be taking a vacation day.

I hope to have the opportunity to see many of you who will be attending the Triple I conference this coming weekend in Chicago. Both Chris Koch and I will be joining most of the State Board members at their annual “meet and greet” reception for conference-goers, to be held from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday in the Comiskey Room at the Hyatt Regency.

As you recall, when I started doing these weekly missives, I only expected to be writing them for a few months. I didn’t really anticipate committing myself to a weekly column for over two years (!), but I have enjoyed it—and I’ve appreciated the kind comments from many of you who’ve enjoyed reading them.

We in Illinois also have the good fortune to have a State Board that focuses first and foremost on what is good for kids and schools without getting pulled off in other less productive directions, as we see in some states.

I would be remiss if I didn’t once again extend my sincere words of gratitude and deep appreciation to our ISBE employees. Being State Supe is a far-from-impossible job—as I’ve said before, most of you could do it—but only because of the intelligence and dedication of many talented people who work at the Alzina Building in beautiful downtown Springfield, on the 4th and 14th floors of the Thompson Center in Chicago and in the field across the state.

Special thanks go to Carol Groves, my assistant and Becky Watts, ISBE Chief of Staff, both based here in Springfield, for all they have done in keeping both me and the Agency chugging along, sometimes in spite of myself.

I also want to thank all of you for your patience and (usually) good humor as we’ve made this transition to a new governance model for P-12 education in the Land of Lincoln—some days better than others certainly, but always trying to follow the physician’s maxim: First, do no harm. As I’ve had the blessing of traveling the state these past 26 months, I’ve been literally amazed at the passion and ethic of the full range of Illinois’s education professionals…from our 0-3 parent educators, to the tens of thousands of classroom teachers, to the professors of our graduate candidates. We stand with the best in the nation.

Please come visit at Murray State University anytime—especially if you’re dragging along a prospective student or two!

Have a great life.

Randy Dunn
Upcoming Deadlines

- Limitation of Administrative Costs Worksheet – November 15
- Unfilled Positions Survey – November 15
- Annual Financial Reports to ISBE – November 15
- Student Poster Contest – November 15
- NCLB Monitoring Instrument – November 15
- NCLB Title I Comparability – November 17
- NCLB Performance Report – November 17
- Online Ordering for ACCESS Testing Materials – November 17
- Educators to Saudi Arabia – November 27
- Public Comment on Rules Part 232 (Summer Bridges) and Part 270 (Advanced Placement) - November 27
- Annual Statement of Affairs in local newspapers – December 1
- Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library Museum field trip grants – December 1
- Annual Statement of Affairs to ISBE – December 15
- Annual Immigrant Education Program (IEP) Data Report – December 15
- Love Your Veggies™ Grant – December 15
- NCUST Excellence in Education Awards – December 18
- Certificate of Tax Levy – December 26
- Waiver applications to be considered by General Assembly in Spring 2007 – January 12, 2007

Student Assessment

ISAT and IMAGE reports

ISBE is currently in the verification process for 2005-2006 ISAT and IMAGE testing results. Once that verification is complete, ISBE will be printing the reports listed below.

The printing and delivery process will take four to five weeks. At that time ISBE will deliver the following ISAT and IMAGE items to districts (to individual schools in Chicago):
- District Summary
- School Summaries
- District Roster
- School Rosters
- Individual Student Reports*
- Student Data Disk

The reports and summaries listed above are separate from the ISAT results districts will receive on the School Report Card. While there is not yet a timeline yet for posting of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) or the School Report Cards, ISBE will notify superintendents through IWAS when AYP and School Report Cards are posted.

We apologize for the delay and understand how difficult and frustrating this situation is for schools and families. Thank you for your patience.

ACCESS for ELLs® - Pre-ID label information

The pre-ID labels for the ACCESS for ELLs® language proficiency test will be handled differently than last year.

ISBE Student Assessment has made changes to help TBE/TPI coordinators and district staff in charge of Limited English Proficient (LEP) services.

ISBE will pull all the names and student demographic information for LEP students in grades Kindergarten through 12 from the Student Information System (SIS). Every student identified as LEP will receive a pre-ID label for ACCESS.

Districts are encouraged to make sure that LEP students have their State ID numbers and current demographic information entered into SIS before November 22, 2006. ISBE vendor MetriTech will use this information to produce the pre-ID labels which will be sent to districts around January 9, 2007.

If you have any questions, email Becky McCabe at rmccabe@isbe.net or call MetriTech at 1-800-747-4828.

2008 Testing Dates set

The testing windows for the 2008 ISAT, IMAGE and PSAE are set as follows:
- ISAT / IMAGE (Grades 3-8) – March 3–14, 2008*
  - Early Window – February 25–March 7, 2008
  - Late Window – March 10-21, 2008
- PSAE / IMAGE (Grade 11) – April 23-24, 2008

*The 2006 Individual Student Report Templates are available online for viewing: http://www.isbe.net/assessment/
o Make-up Testing – May 7-8, 2008

Test window modification forms for ISAT and IMAGE for the 2008 testing year will be available on ISBE’s Student Assessment web site in August, 2007.

*One week earlier than usual due to spring breaks tied to holidays.

Curriculum and Instruction

Arts and Foreign Language RFP

ISBE will release an RFP for Arts and Foreign Language Assistance Planning Grants on December 1, 2006. Eligible applicants are school districts, public university laboratory schools, charter schools and area career centers. The purpose of the grant is to provide resources to plan for initiating, expanding or improving instruction in arts or foreign language. Applicants are required to attend one of three bidders’ conferences scheduled in Bloomington on December 6, Schaumburg on December 7 or Carbondale on December 12. For further information, contact Roberta Volkman at rvolkman@isbe.net or 217/557-7323.

Fiscal Services

Illinois Textbook Loan Program

The Illinois Textbook Loan Program will open for school ordering November 15, 2006 and will close on March 15, 2007. The Fiscal Year 2007 program will service grades 9-12. ISBE sent out school packages November 8, 2006, to all administrators with grades nine through 12 students. If you have any questions, please call 217-782-0734.

English Language Learning

Celebrating Our Gains, Expanding Our Aims

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Division of English Language Learning in cooperation with the Illinois Association for Multilingual Multicultural Education and Illinois Resource Center, invites educators to "Celebrating Our Gains, Expanding Our Aims, the 30th Annual Statewide Conference for Teachers of Linguistically and Culturally Diverse Students, December 11 through 14, 2006.

The conference will be held at the Oakbrook Hills Marriott Resort, 3500 Midwest Road, Oakbrook, Illinois 60523, phone 630-850-5555.

More than 2500 conference attendees will choose from more than 150 concurrent sessions blending theory and practice in literacy, content area instruction, academic standards and student assessment. Participants will hear from experts in the field including: Tim Boals, Carlos Cortez, Fred Genesee, Kenji Hakuta, Else Hamayan, Kathryn Lindholm-Leary, Robert Marzano and Donna Ogle.

For more information, visit http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/index.html or call the Illinois Resource Center at 847-803-3112.

United States Department of Education

School safety

In the wake of recent school shootings and the subsequent White House Conference on School Safety, the U.S. Department of Education will present a one-hour Web cast to provide parents, educators, school administrators and local safety personnel with an opportunity to review their emergency management plans. The Department's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools will share successful strategies so that all who share the responsibility of protecting our children can learn more about how schools can help mitigate, prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from a crisis. Join the broadcast to learn how to take positive steps to prevent school violence and respond quickly and effectively if an incident does occur. The Web cast will offer many opportunities for viewers to ask questions via email and get answers from the presenters. http://www.connectlive.com/events/edschoolsafety/

National Consortium of School Violence Prevention Researchers and Practitioners

The National Consortium of School Violence Prevention Researchers and Practitioners has published a Fall 2006 School Shootings Position Statement at: http://www.ncsvprp.org.

Federal Grants and Programs

School Improvement Planning Audio Conferences

Access iInfo and materials now available

ISBE will host audio conference sessions to talk about the requirements and timelines for revised school improvement plans. These audio conference sessions will be held November 15 from 1:30 to 3 p.m. and December
12 from 9:30 to 11 a.m. Please access School Improvement under Hot Topics on the ISBE home page for access information for these audio conferences and to download materials pertinent to the audio conference.

Schools currently in Academic Warning and Watch Status are encouraged to participate in one of these sessions. Schools with preliminary data indicating academic status should also participate.

Schools that have not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two consecutive years are required to revise their school improvement plans. Schools have three months to revise their plans following notification of academic status. Though not required to revise their plans at this time, schools in Academic Warning and Watch status with approved plans on file with ISBE for FY07 are welcome to participate in these sessions. ROE and RESPRO staff serving schools in status are encouraged to participate in these sessions.

Notification of status related to the state assessment results will start the clock ticking for revising school improvement plans. As soon as final notification occurs, schools will have the full three months for planning, followed by a 45 day peer review process and local board approval. At the end of that period, district superintendents must post the approved plans using the Illinois e-Plan School Improvement Template at the Interactive Illinois Report Card website http://iirc.niu.edu/. Please contact Federal Grants and Programs at 217-524-4832 with any questions about these audio conferences.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities needs assessment online

In an effort to provide the best prevention program information and quality statewide, ISBE has developed an online questionnaire that addresses different facets of the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities (SDFSC) programs: http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=295452814037

The questionnaire focuses on district needs related to prevention in the areas of school safety, substance abuse/addiction topics, cultural competence, policy, curricular, prevention research and evaluation. ISBE will use the information to develop improved prevention education.

Answers will be confidential and reported by region. While completing the questionnaire is strictly voluntary, ISBE encourages districts to participate. ISBE will share the results during the Illinois Statewide 2007 NCLB Conference, February 14-16, 2007.

If you have questions, please contact Albert Holmes at 312-814-3618 or aholmes@isbe.net.

Student Opportunities

Illinois Fatherhood Initiative—“What My Father Means to Me”

- Each student is asked to write a 250 word (or less) essay on the theme “What My Father Means to Me,” describing their relationship with their father or father figure. Father figures can include: uncles, brothers, coaches or other persons of influence to the student.
- Each student will receive a Certificate of Participation as well as coupons for other prizes. Each student will also have a chance to win a $1,000 Bright Start college scholarship and an invitation to the May 2007 Faces of Fatherhood Celebration at U.S. Cellular Field.
- The Top 100 Schools that participate in the Essay Contest will be awarded a Best Buy Gift Card, compliments of IFI.
- Twelve of the essay finalists and their Fathers or Father Figures will be invited to attend the June, 2007 IFI Fatherhood Celebration Dinner in Chicago.
- Essay contest materials will be available online in November at http://www.4fathers.org.
- The contest officially begins on December 1, 2006. Essays must be postmarked on or before Friday March 9, 2007.

Research and Resources

Congressional Medal of Honor teaching resource

The Medal of Honor Foundation recently donated a copy of the hardcover book, Medal of Honor: Portraits of Valor Beyond the Call of Duty to each of more than 800 Illinois schools. The Foundation inadvertently sent the wrong talking paper with the book. ISBE has posted the correct talking paper online at: http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/pdf/Outline_Med_of_Honor_Book_06.pdf

International Education Week

The United States Department of Education and the United States Department of State encourage schools to promote international education throughout the school year and especially during
International Education Week, November 13 through 17, 2006.

This year’s theme is *International Education: Engaging in Global Partnerships and Opportunities*. For more information on how schools can get involved, visit [http://iew.state.gov](http://iew.state.gov).

---

**Professional Development**

**University of Illinois announces new cohort-based program in Oak Brook**

The Department of Educational Organization and Leadership at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is offering a new cohort-based program in Oak Brook beginning Summer 2007. Prospective students can pursue either the Master of Education or Advanced Certificate degree. The Oak Brook based Educational Administration Program is designed to meet both the degree requirements of the College of Education and the certification requirements for the State of Illinois General Administrative Endorsement (Type 75). Admitted students will enter the cohort program together and continue through their course work as a group. Applications for admission to the fall cohort must be submitted by April 2, 2007. An informational meeting is scheduled at the Multi-University Center in Oak Brook, IL (1010 Jorie Blvd.) from 5:30 to 7 PM on Wednesday, December 6, 2006. For more information on the program or informational meeting, please visit the following URL: [http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eol/edadmin/home.html](http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/eol/edadmin/home.html).

---

**Upcoming November Events at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum**

- For more information about the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum visit us online at [http://www.alplm.org/intro_0a_content.html](http://www.alplm.org/intro_0a_content.html) or email HPA.ALPLM.Events@illinois.gov.

---

**Illinois Department of Public Health**

**Healthy habits important in influenza season**

The Illinois Department of Public Health alerts schools to remind students to practice healthy habits, including:

- Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw the tissue away
- Clean hands often
- Get plenty of sleep and physical activity
- Drink plenty of water
- Eat good food to help stay healthy

The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides materials for educators to help spread prevention messages. The materials are available online at the CDC Flu Gallery at: [http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/patiented.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/patiented.htm).

---

**Nutrition**

**Love Your Veggies™ Nationwide School Lunch Campaign grant opportunity for elementary schools**

A recent study in Northern California showed that children ate nearly 25 percent more fresh vegetables when paired with a moderate amount of ranch dressing. To help schools implement their Local Wellness Policies, Team Hidden Valley, is offering six (6) fifteen thousand dollar ($15,000) grants to public elementary schools to support increased access to and consumption of fresh, healthy foods made available through an on-campus vegetable stations. In addition to the direct funding, a donation of Hidden Valley® ranch dressings (schools can select from a variety of Hidden Valley® dressings options including the Light and Fat Free offerings) will also be made to the awardees.

Proposals are due December 15, 2006, at 5 pm PST. Funding must be spent on any of the following:

- equipment for vegetable station;
- fresh produce (vegetables and fruits);
- program staffing (to run vegetable station);
- nutrition education supplies; or
- nutritional training. (Each grant recipient must spend a minimum of $2,000 of the $15,000 grant on nutritional training including a course for school personnel given by their local EFNEP representative on how to create a healthy and nutritious environment in the school.)

For further information visit: [http://www.asfsa.org/Index.aspx?id=2161](http://www.asfsa.org/Index.aspx?id=2161)
**Annual Administrative Reviews News**

The annual list of sponsors eligible for selection by Nutrition Programs for Administrative Reviews for fiscal year (FY) 2007 is available online at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/requirements.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/requirements.htm).

Currently, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) requires an Administrative Review once every five years and no longer than six years between visits, however schools may be visited more frequently. Nutrition Programs has completed a number of reviews in advance of the five-year minimum. Therefore, all sponsors last reviewed in FY 2002 and FY 2003 are identified as eligible for a review in FY 2007.

Most Administrative Reviews will be conducted between January and June 2007. Approximately 30 days in advance of the review, a monitor will contact the school food authority to schedule an on-site review. In addition, an announcement letter and review checklist will be mailed to your district to assist in preparation for the review.

If you need guidance on areas of the review checklist, the Basic Training—A Guide to School-Based Child Nutrition Programs manual is available for order online at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/workshops.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/workshops.htm).

On the Workshop/Training Schedule and Online Registration page, scroll down to Basic Training—A Guide to School-Based Child Nutrition Program. Below the descriptive paragraph, click on Basic Training Manual Order Form, complete the information and a manual will be mailed to you free of charge.

If you have any questions, please email [cnp@isbe.net](mailto:cnp@isbe.net) or contact Dean Held at 800-545-7892.

---

**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**