1. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Several individuals addressed funding for online library tools. A request for a $5 million line item to be added to ISBE’s budget was made.

Paula Pergament talked about the Adler Planetarium and the Columbia Explorer Academy. She requested a $600,000 line item to support expansion of the planetarium’s distance learning and other programs.

Jack Wuest with the Alternative School network asked for $40 million dollars to be put in the budget for incentive grants to get reenrollment programs started across the state. He had several students with him speak about the network.

David Chizwer from the Illinois Network of Charter Schools discussed funding for the start-up of Charter Schools. He asked that the law be complied with and that an appropriation for Charter School Start-Up grants be put in place.

Ron Giles discussed the benefits of Charter Schools.

Phyllis Locket discussed state funding to open new charter schools.

Judy Pacey discussed the ROE Services line item. She encouraged the Board to restore funding to the 2003 level.

Paul Frank discussed a grant program for Science and Mathematics.

Michelle Olson discussed some of what the University of Chicago supports. They run three charter schools and hope to open two more in the next 18 months with the state support. They are involved in a K-12 research, they have a teacher training program and they run unique college preparations courses. They would like to see their grant proposal program supported this would allow institutions like theirs to be able to expand program opportunities and it would bring other higher institutions to the table and engage in this important work.

Kim Ransom runs a college access program for Chicago public school students. She discussed its success and how the funding would help them.

Chris Kennedy discussed the amount of children with Autism and the training the teachers have. He requested $1 million for the Autism budget.

Carol P. from the Illinois Civic Mission asked for funding to continue their work.

Joe Brennan from the Field Museum renewed their request for funding.
2. DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Common Monitoring Database—Project Update
Terry Chamberlain and Warren Summers of the Data Systems division provided an update on the status of the Centralized Monitoring System. The system is to incorporate information reporting in monitoring activities across the agency to focus management attention and elevate problems in districts as they occur. Currently, monitoring activities of the divisions are not widely shared with other divisions. Communication takes place on a department by department basis and is not structured with limited reporting across divisions. Data Systems has gathered information from the department and found the level of computerization ranging from high to low with Funding and Disbursements, External Assurance, Child Nutrition, and Special Education having the highest levels of computerization. Divisions that are more computerized have information in a format that could be shared in centralized system. Other departments are less computerized and it would be more difficult for them to share data.

Joyce Karon stated that this information should all eventually become part of the Agency’s data warehouse. Terry Chamberlain said that is our intention. Andrea Brown expressed that this database would greatly assist in providing better technical assistance to the districts by allowing ISBE to focus on and better support those districts that are in need. Terry Chamberlain stated that Data Systems is analyzing expanding the use of either the External Assurance Tracking System (EATS) or the Special Ed Monitoring and Compliance system across all the divisions. It is his plan to have a prototype data structure available some time in March depending upon the availability of staff. Brenda Holmes asked that we share the update report with the Division Administrators. Terry Chamberlain stated that he would send it to them.

3. DECISION ITEMS

A. Minutes of the December Finance and Audit Committee Meeting
Approved

B. FY07 Budget
Linda Mitchell stated that the Board would be asked in tomorrow’s Plenary Session to formally approved the FY07 or current year budget. Although that budget has been shared with the Board, discussed in prior meetings and used in preparing various agency reports, a review of the past minutes did not show that it had ever formally been ratified by the Board after it was passed by the General Assembly. A copy of the FY07 Budget is in the Plenary Session packet.

C. FY08 Budget
i. Summary of Budget Requests
Linda Mitchell stated that Mr. Geppert, while absent, had summarized the requests from the participants in the budget hearings as well as made a general recommendation for the fiscal year 2008 budget. She stated that the Board had also received a package that includes information regarding the projected General State Aid calculations, the headcount for the agency and new position justifications.

ii. FY08 Estimates for Foundation Level and MCATs
Ronny Wickenhauser discussed General State Aid. The Corporate income taxes are up this year and EAV’s are growing allowing General State Aid to go up at a lower cost. Mr. Geppert had proposed about a $250 million increase. That would buy a $322 increase to the foundation level bringing the Foundation level to $5,656. The current level is $5,334. ISBE had several requests to fund Mandated Categoricals at 100%. The base cost at funding Mandated Categoricals at 100% is $114 million; however, the Special Education Extraordinary appropriation or need is based on the General State Aid foundation level. When you consider the $322 increase to the foundation level that brings the cost to fund Mandated Categoricals at 100% to $132.5 million dollars. So the cost of those two increases together is pretty substantial.
Mr. Wickenhauser also stated that ISBE heard testimony during the budget hearings to increase the Special Ed Personnel reimbursement rate. One of the suggestions was to double the current amount from $8,000 to $16,000. The cost of that at funding at 100% is $332.6 million. These three items would make up a request for increase funding for fiscal year 2008 of $714 million. The percentage increase for General State Aid and Mandated Categorical’s is about 13%.

iii. Board Budget Recommendations
Brenda Holmes motioned to accept Mr. Geppert’s recommendations on General State Aid and Mandated Categoricals, and that the request for Special Ed Personnel be at $166.3 million (rather than $332.6 million). The motion was seconded by Jesse Ruiz.


Jesse Ruiz made a motion to approve the rest of Mr. Geppert’s proposals for specific grant programs on the fiscal year 2008 budget. David Fields seconded the motion. Brenda Holmes proposed that the committee deal only with the line items currently in the ISBE budget, then address additional requests not currently in the budget. Discussion ensued, however, Mr. Ruiz asked that his original motion be voted on.


Motion carried for the adoption of the remainder of Mr. Geppert’s proposed increases for the fiscal year 2008 budget.

Ronny Wickenhauser discussed funding for ISBE operations. Questions arose on adding funding for a Data Warehouse. Ronny Wickenhauser stated that the funds could be a separate line item or it can be added into other operations contractual line item.

Ronny Wickenhauser stated the personal services number includes what we need to maintain staffing levels with our current contractual obligations and also includes the funding with the additional 60 staff we are requesting. The other operations line item includes some operational increases, some minimal operational increases to the travel line item and to some other line items. The biggest part of that $1.2 million is for computer related stuff mainly to replace all of the agencies servers.

Brenda Holmes asked if there was any federal money to use. Ronny said we are using federal money for some of them.

Brenda Holmes would like a seasonal person added to the Governmental relations staff.

Jesse Ruiz moved for the approval of Mr. Geppert’s proposal for funding for personnel services and related, as well as an amended other operations number (to include funding for a Data Warehouse). Joyce Karon seconded the motion.


D. Other
Linda Mitchell stated that in February the Finance and Audit Committee will hear a report from the Chief Internal Auditor Lisa Labonte on the status of the external audit findings. Deb Vespa will be participating in the February board meeting to have the Chairman of the Livingston FOP address the board and ask for formal approval to dissolve the FOP. In March, the Finance and Audit Committee will be able to review the financial profiles for FY 06. The information is currently being collected by the school districts. ISBE will go through their AFR’s.

E. Adjourn