



Illinois State Board of Education

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Weekly Message

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January 23, 2006

Weekly Message from State Superintendent Randy Dunn

Good afternoon.

As I mentioned this past Tuesday in the *Weekly Message* opener, I want to spend a few moments today talking about educator induction and mentoring—where we are, and where I hope we can go.

Many of you know about the Induction for the 21st Century Educator professional development series available statewide through the Regional Offices of Education and Intermediate Service Centers. This program provides for multi-tiered professional development involving a three-phase educational leader training (covering Awareness, Application, and Analysis) as well as a six-day, district-selected mentor training that utilizes mentor coaches. Each of the three leader “phase” trainings is approved for Administrator Academy credit.

A formal external evaluation of this program was done last year by a team of researchers from Metritech, Inc. and Virginia Tech, so we have solid evidence of the program’s effectiveness.

As such, I want to really commend this program to school districts statewide which may have yet to take advantage of it. It is the closest thing we have to a statewide program to date—and it can really add exponentially to your local district efforts around teacher mentoring and induction. I also want to thank program coordinators Vicki Hensley (Assistant Regional Superintendent for Iroquois and Kankakee counties) and Nicki Rosenbaum (retired Assistant Regional Superintendent for DeWitt, Livingston, and McLean counties) for the leadership they are providing to Illinois in this area. (For those who have come only recently to school administration in Illinois—and have heard vague reference to the “Nicki and Vicki Show”—this is it...and their strong track record in this state speaks for itself.)

However, this is not enough. Planned and systemic induction and mentoring are critical hallmarks of holding membership in a true profession, so I will continue to push for these programs within every school district in the state. There is a lot of policy “churning” going on right now around these issues that will help us keep their importance at the forefront of attention. The State Board’s Strategic Plan has an objective on creating “networks to provide support, induction, and mentoring, especially for first-year teachers and those teachers moving from initial to standard certification” and we have started work in that area. The Illinois Education Research Council is working with SRI International, Eastern Illinois University, and the Illinois New Teacher Collaborative to do a case study analysis of exemplary teacher induction program in the state.

In addition, MetLife and the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future recently held a policy forum in Chicago (one of only three in the country) to focus on how we can do a better job in the following areas:

- Having induction and mentoring be one stage in a continuum of teachers’ professional development;
- Focusing on induction into a school-wide learning community;
- Supporting external networks, especially with online technologies; and
- Utilizing induction programs to improve teacher retention, teacher quality, and student achievement.

At the same time we seek to increase the reach of teacher induction and mentoring efforts in more comprehensive and systemic ways on a statewide basis, this expanding research base can also certainly add value as you build a repertoire of these practices locally in your

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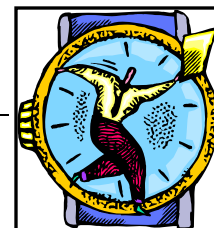
districts across the state. And most every college or department of education in your regional institutions of higher education should be ready to partner with you on this; a number of colleges and universities have exemplary programs in place.

Finally, I've previously spoken on similar I&M efforts for principals being pushed by the Illinois State Action for Education Leadership Project (IL-SAELP) and the Commission on School Leader Preparation undertaken by the Board of Higher Education.

So, I do hope we're on the cusp—over the next couple of years—of really ramping-up educator induction and mentoring here in Illinois and (as they say) “taking it to the next level.” I look forward to having your help as we carry this message to policymakers and the public.

Have a great week.

Randy Dunn



Upcoming Deadlines

- Biotechnology Institute outstanding project summary – **January 25, 2006**
- Hurricane Education Recovery Act applications – **January 26, 2006**
- Illinois Association of Teachers of English (IATE) Best Illinois Poetry and Prose Contest - **January 31, 2006**
- IDEA Requirement - District documentation of consultation with private schools and parent representatives of those schools within their jurisdictions – **January 31, 2006**
- Illinois Zero Waste School Program Grant – **February 1, 2006**
- Kinder Excellence in Teaching Award nominations due – **February 1, 2006**
- General Mills Champions for Healthy Kids grant applications – **February 1, 2006**
- Illinois Alternate Assessment materials ordering deadline – **February 10, 2006**
- National Youth Science Camp Applications – **February 17, 2006**
- Rulemaking Part 1 (Public Schools Evaluation, Recognition and Supervision), Deadline for Public Comment - **February 20, 2006**
- Rulemaking Part 25 (Certification), Deadline for Public Comment - **February 20, 2006**
- Rulemaking Part 305 (School Food Service), Deadline for Public Comment - **February 20, 2006**
- National Center for Urban School Transformation Awards – **February 27, 2006**
- Fordham University National School Changes Awards applications – **March 3, 2006**
- 21st Century Community Learning Center Proposals – **March 15, 2006**
- American Stars of Teaching Award nominations – **April 15, 2006**

Grants

Hurricane Education Recovery Act deadline January 26

The United States Department of Education (USED) posted the Hurricane Education Recovery Act (HERA) notice in the Federal Register on January 12, 2006. **School districts must submit applications to the Illinois State Board of Education no later than this Thursday, January 26.**

Nonpublic schools and parents of nonpublic school children should send their completed forms to the public school district in which the nonpublic school is located, **not** to ISBE.

Public school districts should mail the original copy of their completed, signed HERA applications to:
**Rich Dehart, Illinois State Board of Education
 Accountability Division Mail Code E-230
 100 North First Street, Springfield, IL 62777**

While the original signed application is required, districts may FAX an advance copy of the completed application to: **Rich Dehart, Accountability Division, Illinois State Board of Education, 217-524-8750.**

Please direct any questions to **Darren Reisberg**, ISBE Deputy General Counsel via email at dreisber@isbe.net or by phone at 312-814-2223.

21st Century Community Learning Centers RFP now available

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Federal Grants and Programs Division has released the FY2007 21st Century Community Learning Centers Programs Request for Proposals (RFP) that can be accessed at <http://www.isbe.net/21cclc/>. The FY07 grant will provide funds in the amount of \$6.1 million for quality, out of school programming for Illinois students attending low performing, high poverty schools. These centers provide students with academic enrichment opportunities, as well as artistic, cultural, and recreational activities to complement their regular academic programs.

Eligible applicants include local education agencies, charter schools, area vocational centers; community based organizations, including faith-based organizations; or other public and private entities. ROEs/ ISCs may apply for funds to coordinate and carry out activities for LEAs, participating organizations, or a consortium of eligible applicants. Proposals are due on March 15.

Technical assistance conferences will be held on February 6, 2006, in Matteson; on February 7, 2006, in Chicago, and on February 8, 2006, in Springfield. Full details for these conferences will be posted on the above website during the last week of January. For more information on this RFP, contact **Gail Meisner** at 217-524-4832.

Youth nutrition and fitness grants

The General Mills Foundation is accepting grant applications for General Mills Champions for Healthy Kids, a partnership with the American Dietetic Association Foundation and the President's Challenge to encourage healthy eating choices and active lifestyles in kids.

General Mills will make 50 grants of \$10,000 each to schools and community groups with innovative programs aimed at improving the nutrition and activity habits of young people.

Information, grant applications, best practices and model programs are available at <http://www.generalmills.com/corporate/commitment/champions.aspx>.

Applications are due on or before February 1, 2006.

School Awards

National Center for Urban School Transformation awards

The National Center for Urban School Transformation (NCUST) has established the Excellence in Education Award. NCUST will recognize as semi-finalists all schools that:

- achieved Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005;
- in 2004-2005 met all State requirements for AYP for school year 2006-2007;
- achieved at least 92 percent average daily attendance in 2003-2004 and 2004-2005;
- for high schools, achieved a 75 percent cohort graduation rate for every major demographic group of students;
- achieved a low suspension/expulsion rate; and
- showed other strong evidence of academic excellence such as high percentages of students passing advanced placement exams, or higher percentages of students completing rigorous courses of study.

Applications are due February 27, 2006 and are available at: <http://edweb.sdsu.edu/ncust/>.

Legal

Restrictions on political activities

As the 2006 campaign season gets underway, ISBE would like to remind school districts of the legal restrictions on political activities. All school districts must have already adopted an ethics policy governing political activities as least as restrictive as the provisions of Section 5-15 of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/15).

Accordingly, each school district's policy must, at a minimum, restrict political activities during compensated time and cannot "misappropriate" any school district property or resources for political purposes. Please note that under the Ethics Act's definitions, restrictions on political activities apply to both campaigns for elected offices and referendum questions.

To avoid the misappropriation of school district property or resources for political purposes, school districts must use care when allowing political activities on school grounds or using school resources such as websites or mail systems. While district policy may allow a political organization to use district facilities or a website for political purposes on the same basis as other outside organizations, it cannot give preferential treatment to a particular

political viewpoint. Giving one political organization preferential access to district property or resources would, in this agency’s opinion, violate the Ethics Act’s restrictions on misappropriating government resources for political activity. The relevant provisions of the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act are copied below.

- (a) (5 ILCS 430/70-5)
Sec. 70-5. Adoption by governmental entities.
(a) Within 6 months after the effective date of this Act, each governmental entity shall adopt an ordinance or resolution that regulates, in a manner no less restrictive than Section 5-15 and Article 10 of this Act, (i) the political activities of officers and employees of the governmental entity and (ii) the soliciting and accepting of gifts by and the offering and making of gifts to officers and employees of the governmental entity.

- (5 ILCS 430/5-15)
Sec. 5-15. Prohibited political activities.
(a) State employees shall not intentionally perform any prohibited political activity during any compensated time (other than vacation, personal, or compensatory time off). State employees shall not intentionally misappropriate any State property or resources by engaging in any prohibited political activity for the benefit of any campaign for elective office or any political organization.
(b) At no time shall any executive or legislative branch constitutional officer or any official, director, supervisor, or State employee intentionally misappropriate the services of any State employee by requiring that State employee to perform any prohibited political activity (i) as part of that employee's State duties, (ii) as a condition of State employment, or (iii) during any time off that is compensated by the State (such as vacation, personal, or compensatory time off).
(c) A State employee shall not be required at any time to participate in any prohibited political activity in consideration for that State employee being awarded any additional compensation or employee benefit, in the form of a salary adjustment, bonus, compensatory time off, continued employment, or otherwise.
(d) A State employee shall not be awarded any additional compensation or employee benefit, in the form of a salary adjustment, bonus, compensatory time off, continued employment, or otherwise, in consideration for the State employee's participation in any prohibited political activity.
(e) Nothing in this Section prohibits activities that are otherwise appropriate for a State

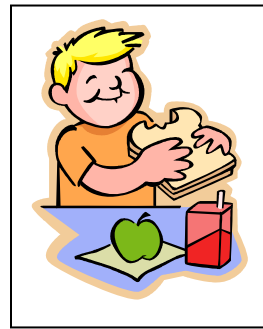
employee to engage in as a part of his or her official State employment duties or activities that are undertaken by a State employee on a voluntary basis as permitted by law.

- (f) No person either (i) in a position that is subject to recognized merit principles of public employment or (ii) in a position the salary for which is paid in whole or in part by federal funds and that is subject to the Federal Standards for a Merit System of Personnel Administration applicable to grant-in-aid programs, shall be denied or deprived of State employment or tenure solely because he or she is a member or an officer of a political committee, of a political party, or of a political organization or club.

(Source: P.A. 93-615, eff. 11-19-03.)

Nutrition

School Meals Initiative resources



The United States Department of Agriculture has announced the newly developed “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) resource and other items related to School Meals Initiatives (SMI). The document is additional SMI guidance to use in implementing SMI requirements. School Food Authorities (SFA) will

receive print copies of the FAQs as well as Road to SMI Success—A Guide for School Foodservice Directors and Nutrient Analysis Protocols—How to Analyze Menus for USDA’s School Meals Programs when they become available. The latter two items are available to download at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Resources/roadtosuccess.html> and <http://www.fns.usda.gov/tn/resources/nutrientanalysis.html> respectively.

Illinois Department of Public Health recommends removal of Del Rey Flour Tortillas from service

The Illinois Department of Public Health has recommended that all schools remove from service all product that bears the labeling Del Rey Tortilleria, Inc. Tortillas de Harina, 12 flour tortillas, Net Wt. 12 oz. (340g) Del Rey Tortilleria, Inc., 5201 W. Grand Avenue, Chicago, Ill. 60639.

While sample results and investigations at the processing plant do not conclusively link the recently

reported illnesses in the Peoria schools in December to this product, test results provided to the Department on January 18, 2006 by the Centers for Disease Control indicate that the product formulation contains one particular ingredient present at higher than expected levels. While the Department works with the processor to determine necessary corrective actions, it is prudent to prevent further consumption of these tortillas.

These products may be put on hold in freezers and marked "Do not serve until further notice." ISBE will notify schools when the results of this investigation are concluded.

Summer Food Service Program training

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) is designed to provide nutritious meals during the summer months to children from areas where at least 50 percent are eligible for free or reduced-priced meals during the school year through the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Does your area meet this criterion? If so, consider becoming a sponsor to help bridge the gap for the children in your community. All sponsors will be required to submit the program application and monthly claims for reimbursement via the Internet.

If the responsibilities of sponsorship of SFSP are not possible, you can still participate in the program by operating a site, being a vendor, or volunteering your time. Visit the Nutrition Programs website at <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/summer.htm> to learn more about this vital program and how you can help.

Training workshops for the Summer Food Service Program will be this February and March for organizations interested in sponsoring SFSP during the summer of 2006. Be sure to visit our website at <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/summer.htm> for confirmation of workshop locations, times, and registration. All sponsors are required to attend the training. For additional information, contact **Amy Bianco** at 800-545-7892 or email abianco@isbe.net.

Special Education

Interim guidance for special education services for parentally placed private school children with disabilities: Requirement for district documentation of timely and meaningful consultation

The new Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) made some significant changes to requirements for the provision of special education and related services to parentally placed private school children with disabilities. Generally, each local educational agency (LEA) must conduct child find, determine the proportionate share of Federal Part B funds and provide equitable services to parentally-placed private school children with disabilities who attend private schools located in the LEA *without regard to where the children reside*. These changes became effective on July 1, 2005. A memorandum providing interim guidance for the 2005-2006 school year was released in August and can be found at http://www.isbe.net/spec-ed/pdfs/memo_05-7.pdf.

School districts were required to conduct "timely and meaningful consultation" with representatives of the private schools and parent representatives of those schools within their jurisdictions by no later than November 15, 2005. In addition, local districts were expected to submit copies of all documentation evidencing completion of the consultation process to ISBE. Thus far, only a fraction of the districts have submitted the necessary documentation to ISBE. This is a reminder to districts that have not submitted their documentation to do so by no later than January 31, 2006. If the necessary documentation is not received by this deadline, ISBE will be issuing formal warning letters to districts immediately thereafter.

Documentation may be sent to the attention of Dr. **Christopher Koch**, Assistant Superintendent for Special Education at our Springfield office, 100 N. 1st Street, Springfield, IL 62777.

If you have questions concerning your district's obligations, please contact **Andy Eulass** in the Department of Special Education Services at 217-782-5589.

Student Assessment

Illinois Alternate Assessment deadlines

February 3 is the last day for a student to move into a school/district and still be required to take the 2005-06 IAA. Any student who moves in after this day is exempt from testing.

February 10 is the last day to order materials for the 2005-06 IAA. If you need additional materials, contact **Amanda Breitmaier** at 877-732-5306 or abreitmaier@measuredprogress.org. The ordering process must be done online.

For schools and districts that previously ordered materials, the binders, demographic forms and shipping labels were mailed the week of January 16. February 17 is the final day to ship portfolios to Measured Progress for scoring. Shipment instructions are included with the binders and demographic forms.

If you have questions about the IAA process, contact **Marilyn Leveque**, ISBE, 217/782-4823 or mleveque@isbe.net.

ISAT 2006 Testing

The issues below are related to ISAT 2006 Testing:

1) Ten minutes - Additional time allowed for all students, if needed - New This Year

For ISAT, students may have up to 10 additional minutes to complete each test session. If one or more students are still working and are actively engaged after 45 minutes have elapsed, they may be given up to 10 additional minutes to complete the test session, for a total of 55 minutes. The decision as to whether students are actively engaged and should receive additional time is made by the test administrator. If all students are finished after 45 minutes, the test session should be called to an end.

2) Extended Time for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Students - New This Year

Beginning this year, LEP students who take ISAT may receive extended time on each test session. This extended time is over and above the additional 10 minutes that all students may have who are actively engaged in testing. Test administrators must decide ahead of time whether LEP students taking ISAT will receive the additional time beyond the 55 minutes total allowable for a test session. If you anticipate that such students will need extended time beyond the 55 minutes, these students should be tested separately.

The amount of additional time for these students beyond the 55 minutes (45 minutes plus 10 minutes additional) has not yet been specified, but should take into account the student's needs as well as general considerations of what is reasonable. However, in no case may a test session for a student be split across days. Any test session begun on a given day should be finished by the end of that day.

3) Posters and Classroom Displays

- There are only two types of posters that cannot be displayed on classroom walls during ISAT testing. (For posters and classroom displays that are not specifically prohibited, we are relying on your professional judgment.)
- Any poster that has step-by step instructions for answering a reading extended-response question--for example, the Reading Student-Friendly Rubrics
- Any poster that displays and defines those root words and affixes listed in the Illinois Assessment Framework for Reading.
- Students may not get out of their seats to refer to a poster or classroom display during testing.
- Test Administrators should not make reference to posters or classroom displays immediately prior to or during testing. Likewise, posters or classroom displays should not be added to the classroom immediately prior to the two-week test window.
- Posters or classroom displays may not be copied and moved to an alternative testing location which creates an artificial environment and may lead students to believe that they should use these during testing.

4) Desktops During Testing

Desk tops are to be clear except for test materials appropriate for that grade. Anything attached to the desk such as multiplication tables or word lists would have to be removed or covered up. Appropriate materials include grade 3 test booklets, grade 4-8 test booklets and answer documents, writing utensils (No. 2 pencils, pen, if desired, highlighter, if desired), and for the mathematics test, calculators at grades 4-8, paper rulers at grades 3-8, and ISAT Mathematics Reference Sheets for grades 7 and 8. Students with IEPs or Section 504 Plans may have additional materials on their desks as needed to provide accommodations.

Guidelines and appropriate materials for each grade will be covered in the *2006 ISAT District and School Coordination Manual*, the ISAT test administration manuals, and the *Professional Testing Practices for Educators*, which will be available on the ISBE Web site in late January or February.

Teacher Recognition

Education Department seeks nominations for 2006 American Stars of Teaching

The U.S. Department of Education again plans to honor outstanding classroom teachers through the American Stars of Teaching program. The Department's Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative is seeking nominations and information about teachers who are improving student achievement, using innovative strategies in the classroom, and making a difference in the lives of their students.

Teachers across all grade levels and disciplines will be honored this fall as 2006 American Stars of Teaching. Parents, students, colleagues, school administrators and others can nominate an exemplary teacher who they believe has the qualities to be an American Star of Teaching. One teacher will be recognized from each state.

To learn more or nominate a teacher visit:
<http://www.ed.gov/teachers/how/tools/initiative/index.html>.
 Nominations must be completed by April 15. For all the latest news and information from the Teacher-to-Teacher Initiative, including upcoming announcements about free summer workshops, resources for teachers and other opportunities, subscribe to Teacher Updates at
<https://www.teacherquality.us/default.asp>.

English Language Learning

ACCESS for ELLs™ registration deadline January 24

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is offering a free one-day workshop to Universities, Colleges of Education and Regional Offices of Education (including development staff). This workshop provides Professional Development and Overview on ACCESS for ELLs™, a new statewide English language proficiency assessment for English language learners as required by NCLB. The workshop is hosted by Northern Illinois University this Friday, January 27.

Presenters are Jim Bauman, ACCESS developer with the Center for Applied Linguistics and Tim Bauman with the WIDA Consortium. Lunch is provided and the session is free, however, registration is required through the Illinois Resource Center. Registration forms and more information are available at
<http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/index.html>. Click on the ACCESS for ELLs icon.

IASA News

IASA Illinois Education Job BankSM



Whether you are looking for a job or you are seeking qualified applicants

to fill existing permanent, interim, full-time or part-time vacancies, the Illinois Education Job BankSM (IEJBSM) is the state's premier educational job search website. By investing just a few minutes of your time, your opening will be seen by potential applicants from around the country. Public and private schools can post positions according to the following position types: Administrative; Instructional; Non-Certified Staff; and School Service Personnel. You can also choose to post positions for out-of-state administrators.

A few of the highlights of the IEJBSM include:

- The opportunity to post vacancies in just a few minutes;
- Postings are immediately viewable upon submission;
- Automatic "matching service" between the IEJBSM job opportunities and potential applicants through the IEJBSM Resume Builder;
- ROE's are automatically notified when the district posts its vacancies;
- The opportunity for individuals seeking employment to access the postings, post resumes and apply for positions electronically at no cost to the job seeker;
- Application for vacancies can be made online to school districts;
- Minimal annual fee to post vacancies;
- Over 730 Illinois school districts and other educational institutions in Illinois subscribe to the Job BankSM;
- 27,400 vacancies and 23,500 resumes have been posted since May 1999; and
- There were 647,800 hits to the Job BankSM for the month ending December 31, 2005.

The IEJBSM is the fast, one-stop service that is bringing the applicant, job and employer together.

To subscribe to the IEJBSM, contact the IASA at 217-787-9306 by email at jobbank@iasaedu.org or online at <http://www.iasaedu.org/Jobbank/default.htm>.

IBHE News

Illinois Board of Higher Education launches new consumer protection website

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) today launched a revamped website highlighted by a consumer information guide to help students navigate the sometimes daunting array of higher education opportunities. The site is <http://www.ibhe.org>.

The web guide includes a listing of key questions and issues for students to consider when shopping for a college, including information about:

- why college is increasingly important and what to expect from the collegiate experience;
- what kinds of financial aid programs are available and how to apply for student assistance;
- how higher education institutions differ in mission and purpose and what types of degrees, fields of study, and academic programs they offer;
- how accreditation is different from state approval of programs, and why each is useful in evaluating institutions and academic offerings;
- what distance learning opportunities are available and how to access them; and
- how to seek accommodations for students with disabilities and what to do if you have a complaint about a college or university.

In addition, the web site has links to carry consumers to other web pages where they can access financial aid applications, enroll in online classes, find out whether a college or university is accredited, and plumb deeper into understanding what collegiate opportunities may be right for them.

The consumer fraud section of the site explains what diploma mills are and lists common traits – no requirements for study, tests, or other academic assignments, for example, or having no faculty or classes – that will help consumers identify shady operations.

The site suggests various questions to help consumers avoid being victimized by diploma mills, such as:

- Can the degree be purchased?
- Does the institution claim to be accredited but offer no evidence of accreditation by a legitimate agency?
- Does the operation have state authority to operate and grant degrees?
- Does the school require a very short period of time to earn a degree?

The new IBHE website also introduces a new design aimed at making it more accessible and easy to use. The new home page, which features rotating photographs of Illinois colleges and universities, contains links to valuable higher education resources, information about grant programs, a daily digest of higher education news and roster of news releases from the Board and from colleges and universities, the Board's annual collegiate artists competition, and a calendar of upcoming events and meetings.

Other links take users to in-depth information about academic programs, higher education budgets and appropriations, legislative affairs, grant programs, data and statistics, featured links to other prominent higher education or state and national websites, and various reports and studies ranging from the study of faculty salaries to listings of new academic programs to the annual report to the General Assembly on the progress of underrepresented groups in Illinois higher education.

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/pdf/positions.pdf>.

In the News

Weekly news clips

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

<http://www.isbe.net/news/2006/newsclips/060120.htm>.

