



Illinois State Board of Education

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Weekly Message

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February 27, 2006

Weekly Message from State Superintendent Randy Dunn

Good afternoon.

It was great seeing so many superintendent colleagues this past weekend at AASA. In fact, as I finish this, I'm sitting at the airport in St. Louis. Back to work and the real world, I guess...

I want to spend some time this week looking at President's Education Budget request for FY 2007. In outlining his plan, the President has highlighted proposed increases for high school reform initiatives as part of the effort to increase our global competitiveness. While the increased funding for high school initiatives is great, it comes at a cost. Along with these proposed increases, the President's FY 2007 plan would cut overall Federal education spending by more \$3 billion.

In stark contrast to the State education funding increases we've had in Illinois over the last two years, Federal education funding has been flat or reduced in both FY 2006 and FY 2007. The Federal cuts come at a time when the No Child Left Behind Act is forcing us to spend more on testing, teacher training and school improvement to meet the law's mandates.

There are some specific concerns with the President's FY 2007 proposal that seem to be at odds with his global competitiveness agenda. His plan calls for eliminating 42 programs, including Safe and Drug Free Schools, Dropout Prevention, Teacher Quality Enhancement, TRIO Upward Bound and Talent Search Programs, Tech Prep Grants and Education Technology.

Given the President's focus on developing math and science skills in America's students, it's not clear how eliminating technology funding supports a global competitiveness agenda or helps students. And the elimination of programs to support professional development for teachers, encourage first generation college seekers, decrease dropout rates and promote safe schools cuts to the heart of our efforts to support our most at risk students.

The programs slated for elimination in the President's FY 2007 Budget proposal are online at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/overview/budget/budget07/summary/edlite-section3.html#terminations>

As the President's FY 2007 Budget proposal is debated, it will be important for Congress to hear from educators about the plan. I encourage you to contact your U.S. Senators and Representative to share your thoughts on the proposal.

I assure you I will do the same.

As always, have a great week.

Randy Dunn

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Upcoming Deadlines

- Grow Your Own Teacher Grants – **March 1, 2006**
- Fordham University National School Changes Awards applications – **March 3, 2006**
- 21st Century Community Learning Center Proposals – **March 15, 2006**
- Norwegian National League Scholarships – **March 15, 2006**
- Automated External Defibrillator Grant Applications – **March 30, 2006**
- American Stars of Teaching Award nominations – **April 15, 2006**
- Nature of Learning Start-Up Grants – **April 17, 2006**
- Public Comment on Special Education Rulemaking – **August 10, 2006**



Student Assessment

ISAT Cut Scores

The Illinois State Board of Education has unanimously voted to approve the recommendation of the State Testing Review Committee to align the eighth grade ISAT cut scores with those of the other grade levels. The cut scores are posted online at: http://www.isbe.net/assessment/htmls/ISAT_cut_points.htm

No Child Left Behind

Highly Qualified Teachers

The Illinois State Board of Education Certification Division provided an information seminar on Highly Qualified Teachers on January 30, 2006. Representatives from Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers, professional organizations and teacher unions were present. The organizations represented at the meeting will now be able to provide in-service training to teachers and administrators statewide.

The Illinois Education Association (IEA) in collaboration with the State Board of Education has produced an “interactive” worksheet for teachers to use. Following this flow chart and answering the questions allows individual teachers to identify the core academic areas in which they are highly qualified. It is easy and user friendly. Upon completion, the worksheet may be printed out and saved by the teacher or shared with the district. The worksheet is now available to all teachers via the ISBE web site at the following locations:

<http://www.isbe.net/>
<http://www.isbe.net/certification/>
<http://www.isbe.net/teachers.htm>
<http://www.isbe.net/nclb/>

A video explaining Highly Qualified Teachers, produced by the IEA in collaboration with ISBE, is also available on the web sites listed above. The Illinois Education Association, the Illinois

Federation of Teachers, Regional Offices of Education, Intermediate Service Centers and others will present workshops around the state to address the issue of Highly Qualified Teachers and the new HOUSSSE rules. If you have questions or wish to know if there will be a workshop near you, please contact your teacher union, Regional Office of Education, or Intermediate Service Center in your area.

Illinois School Purchasing Network

U.S. Communities

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) is sponsoring U.S. Communities in Illinois to ensure public educational entities have access to high-quality products at some of the best available government prices. U.S. Communities is a nationwide strategic sourcing program designed by public purchasing professionals for use by government agencies.

School districts and ROEs are encouraged to register with U.S. Communities online at:

https://secure.cacomunities.com/uscommunities/register_participate.htm. Registration is the gateway to contracts for a variety of products including school furniture, office and classroom supplies, playground equipment, physical education equipment, janitorial supplies, electrical and telecommunications, etc. Currently 55% of the Illinois public school districts are registered with U.S. Communities.

Please check with your information technology staff before registering to ensure that registration e-mail from U.S. Communities is not blocked. Several school districts have reported that the word “register” was blocked and were prevented from registering. It has been suggested that the phrase “register@” be allowed through from the outside. This modification will allow registration, the first

step to accessing quality products at discounted prices.

Email any questions, comments, and ideas to ispn@isbe.net.

Student Opportunities

Presidential Freedom Scholarships

The [Presidential Freedom Scholarships](#) are currently available for the 2006 program year. This program, administered by Learn and Serve America at the Corporation for National and Community Service, provides Presidential recognition and a \$1,000 college scholarship to high school juniors and seniors for their leadership in community service. The Corporation provides \$500 which must be matched with at least \$500 secured by the high school from the community. Students must complete at least 100 hours of community service to be eligible for the scholarship.

This year the Corporation is offering up to 6,500 scholarships. The postmark deadline to submit certification forms is May 12, 2006.

For more information, please visit <http://www.learnandserve.gov/about/programs/pfs.asp>.

English Language Learning

ACCESS for ELLs™ - March 3

ISBE and Illinois State University will present a One-Day Workshop for Professional Development and Overview on ACCESS for ELLs™. The workshop will focus on the new statewide English language proficiency assessment for English language learners as required by the Federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

The workshop is open to universities, colleges of education and Regional Offices of Education (including development staff). Hosted by Illinois State University, the event will be held this Friday, March 3, 2006.

Lunch will be provided and the session is free, however, registration is required through the Illinois Resource Center at <http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/index.html>. Click on the ACCESS for ELLs icon.

Accountability

School Incident Reporting System

The Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois State Police have developed the School Incident Reporting System through IWAS to collect incident data. This data includes Attacks on School Personnel, Firearms in Schools, and Drug-related Incidents in Schools. The Illinois Compiled Statutes mandates that this incident data be reported as it occurs during the year.

For any incidents that have already occurred please be sure to enter that incident data and any new incidents into the reporting system.

If you have any questions regarding the program, please contact our Accountability Division at 217-782-2948. If you need technical assistance, please contact the helpdesk at 217-558-3600.

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>.

Nutrition

National School Breakfast Week—Go Places With School Breakfast

Mark your calendars for March 6-10, 2006, for National School Breakfast Week (NSBW). Visit the School Nutrition Association's website at www.schoolnutrition.org for materials, recipes, menus, informational flyer, promotion ideas, student activity sheets, and a fact sheet about breakfast. The theme is *Go Places With School Breakfast*. Have fun and be creative. Celebrate NSBW in your schools this year.

Promoting Fruits and Vegetables in Schools

The Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) has developed a document entitled *Promoting Fruits and Vegetables in Schools: Wellness Policy Opportunities* to help schools increase opportunities for their students to eat more fruits and vegetables as part of the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act's Wellness Policy requirement.

Some recommended policies to promote consumption of fruits and vegetable include the following:

- Encourage salad bars
- Market fruits and vegetables
- Offer different fruits and vegetables during the week (fresh, canned, frozen, and dried)
- Provide nutrition education
- Serve fruit and vegetables as snacks

The document is available at:

<http://www.pbhfoundation.org/pulse/policy/programs/>.

Teaching Resources

New, on-line world music-education experience available soon

Listen for Life, a global nonprofit music education organization, is developing an online audiovisual experience of the world's cultures through music and its musicians. "Travels with Music," an interactive, multi-lingual distance education course in world music has been designed for use by individuals and students of all ages.

Available to schools, teachers and students, this adjunct source material can be used for music education or in conjunction with existing curriculum. Students can play games, learn skills and explore countries, learning about individual cultures. This distance education course can help stimulate cross-cultural communication and foster a greater appreciation for the unique musical gifts that lie within each ethnic group.

To learn more, contact Donna Stoering at 510- 540-8136 or dstoering@listenforlife.org. Listen for Life is a global nonprofit music-media organization dedicated to the preservation and advancement of music cultures worldwide. More information is available at <http://www.listenforlife.org/>.

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:

<http://www.isbe.net/news/2006/newsclips/060224.htm>