



Illinois State Board of Education

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Weekly Message

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March 6, 2006

Weekly Message from State Superintendent Randy Dunn

Good afternoon, sort of.

While I have just returned at this writing from a great event with Governor Blagojevich today in the Rochester School District (just outside Springfield) to build support for the Governor’s capital bill—which includes the school construction and maintenance grant money for FY 07—it has not turned out to be my favorite day as State Superintendent. Our Assessment staffers are of a similar mind, I believe.

As a follow-up to my late Friday afternoon email that went to all District Offices, I want to reassure you that over the weekend—and throughout the day today—we have continually pushed Harcourt to do whatever they have to without regard to expense to get tests and all related testing materials in your hands. We very clearly understand your frustration. We know the difficulties have affected your entire school team—faculty, administrators, office staff, custodians and even cafeteria staff—all working hard to make sure everything is in place for students to do their best. I know that staff in many schools around the state worked through the weekend, waiting for materials to arrive and then carting them from district offices into schools.

Clearly, we are not satisfied with Harcourt’s compliance with its contractual obligations with respect to this testing period. As we get past the immediate crisis, my office, along with ISBE’s Student Assessment and Legal Divisions, will review the situation in detail for all appropriate follow-up action that can be taken.

In the meantime, you can imagine that I’ve received a couple of emails on the subject over the weekend and through today. Probably the toughest one I read chided me for not doing something besides sharing platitudes. It is the case that we are doing something beyond just watching this unfold. Because we know how many problems Harcourt’s delivery delays have caused, we are quickly putting procedures in place to address the situation and respond to your immediate concerns:

- All Districts that did not begin testing today who feel that they didn’t have sufficient time to distribute their testing materials can contact ISBE’s Assessment Division to discuss possible accommodations on the testing dates.
- Districts that have incurred expenses related to the delays and other problems with Harcourt’s delivery of testing materials are asked to submit claims in invoice format to ISBE. ISBE will seek payment of those claims from Harcourt on each District’s behalf.

To reach ISBE’s Student Assessment Division by phone, call 217-782-4823 or toll-free 1-866-262-6663. Send email contacts to rmccabe@isbe.net. We will continue keep you updated with information by email and with announcements at <http://www.isbe.net/assessment>.

As I said in my message last Friday, we appreciate your patience and your dedication to being well prepared for testing. We will continue to work the emails that we receive here if you experience problems. Do not hesitate to contact us with specific issues that you may encounter.

Randy Dunn

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Upcoming Deadlines

- 21st Century Community Learning Center Proposals – **March 15, 2006**
- Textbook Loan Program – **March 15, 2006**
- Norwegian National League Scholarships – **March 15, 2006**
- Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report (PDR) – **March 31, 2006**
- American Stars of Teaching Award nominations – **April 15, 2006**
- Nature of Learning Start-Up Grants – **April 17, 2006**
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs Art Contest – **May 31, 2006**
- Public Comment on Special Education Rulemaking – **August 10, 2006**



Funding and Disbursement

FY 2007 Employer Contributions to TRS – Federal Grants

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2007 (July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2007) the employer's share of teachers' retirement will be 9.78 percent for personnel employed with Federal grant funds. As you are aware, this rate has been subject to change and will change from the 7.06 percent which was in place for FY 2006. Further information is available online at:



<http://trs.illinois.gov/subsections/employerservices/employerservices.htm>. The percentage is now determined annually according to the funding amount set by the state legislature. If you have specific questions regarding TRS contributions, you may direct your inquiries to the TRS Employer Services Division at 888-877-0890.

Federal Grants and Programs

Illinois e-Plans

ISBE and Northern Illinois University (NIU) are proud to announce the launch of *Illinois e-Plans District Improvement Plan Template*. Beginning March 6, 2006, *Illinois e-Plans* includes School Improvement Plan Template, School Restructuring Plan Template and District Improvement Plan Template. *Illinois e-Plans* are available through the Interactive Illinois Report Card (IIRC) website at <http://iirc.niu.edu/>.

The *Illinois e-Plans District Improvement Template* may be used by districts in improvement status and academic watch status, by districts that did not meet Annual Measurable Achievement Objectives (AMAO) for two consecutive years and by districts receiving Supplemental General State Aid (SGAS)

with an Average Daily Attendance (ADA) of more than 1,000 and less than 50,000.

Illinois e-Plans significantly streamline the process of submitting required improvement plans to local boards and ISBE. However, the use of the *Template* is not required. Schools and districts may continue to use a format that complies with relevant federal and state laws.

The *Illinois e-Plans* system is designed to be user friendly. Districts and schools will have multiple years (including 2005) of School Report Card data and information at their fingertips automatically populating the screens at the IIRC web site.

Districts may use the same passwords that were previously distributed to access the *Illinois e-Plans*. These passwords are also available by calling **Gail Buoy**, Federal Grants and Programs, 217-524-4832. NIU will also email passwords by the end of the week to district superintendents.

Rules and Waivers

Notice of Completed Rulemaking

A rulemaking item recently adopted by the State Board of Education is now in effect. This set of rules has been posted at <http://www.isbe.net/rules/>. Choose "Rules Currently in Effect" and scroll to the relevant Part number. (If you print only the affected Sections, remember to include the table of contents for the Part, which changes every time the Part is amended.)

Certification (Part 25)

This rulemaking conveys the new set of criteria by which teachers may be considered "highly qualified" in the core academic subject areas as required by the No Child Left Behind Act.

Affected Sections: Appendix D only

Effective Date: February 21, 2006

Early Childhood

Kindergarten Corner new online resource

The Early Childhood website has a great new resource for kindergarten teachers and administrators.

Kindergarten Corner will bring you information about ISBE activities

focused on kindergarten, as well as links to other sites of interest. Check us out at

<http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/>



Early Childhood Outcomes Reporting System info and forms available online

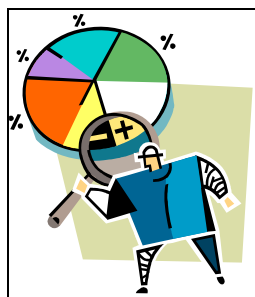
The Early Childhood Outcomes Reporting System information and forms are now available online at: http://www.isbe.net/earlychi/html/birth_5.htm.

School districts that have not completed and submitted their plans for reporting early childhood special education outcomes may download those forms. A PowerPoint presentation and handouts from the trainings are also available online. For more information please contact **Pamela Reising Rechner** at 217-524-4835 or preising@isbe.net.

Data Analysis

Reporting of the 2006 Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report

The Bilingual Education Program Delivery Report (PDR) for 2006 is now available on IWAS. Every school district or educational agency enrolling LEP students is required by law to submit this report to ISBE (Section 14C-3 of the School Code).



This report is due on March 31, 2006. This system will be closed on April 3, 2006, so it is imperative that you submit your data within the required timeline. The Guide for reporting the PDR is available online at: <http://www.isbe.net/research>.

Direct questions about reporting the ASR/SPR **Lilibeth Gumia** at 217-782-3950 or lgumia@isbe.net.

School Report Cards: average class size for all elementary grades

For the 2005-06 school year, data will be collected to compute the average class size for each of the elementary grades (K through 8). In prior years, data were collected only for selected elementary grades (K, 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8). There will be no change for high schools; average class size data will be collected for the high school as a whole, as in prior years.

English Language Learning

Consolidated Application Workshops scheduled

The Division of English Language Learning is pleased to announce the annual series of consolidated application workshops expressly designed for directors of Transitional Programs of Instruction (TPI) and Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs. These workshops are **mandatory for new directors** and appropriate for central office administrators in charge of completing and submitting the district's consolidated application for State bilingual, Title III LIPLEPS or Title III Immigrant Education funds for the FY07 school year. There is no cost to attend but pre-registration is necessary.

See the HOT TOPICS section at <http://www.isbe.net/bilingual> to view the calendar of regional workshops and additional details.

To register, go to <http://www.thecenterweb.org> to access the registration form.

Completed forms are to be mailed to the Illinois Resource Center.

Spanish Language Arts Standards Are Now Available Online

The Illinois State Board of Education adopted Spanish Language Arts Standards for the state. The Spanish Language Arts Standards, developed through the WIDA Consortium of states, are the product of teachers and educators from Illinois and other states, the Illinois Resource Center and George Washington University Center's for Equity and Excellence in Education. The standards are significant because they:

- establish rigorous and comprehensive standards

that are comparable to and align with existing state English language arts standards;

- fulfill the accountability needs of teachers and administrators;
- serve as a framework for instruction and assessment;
- acknowledge the growing numbers of programs serving school-age Spanish speakers in US schools;
- foster the development of bilingual/biliterate individuals in an increasingly diverse workforce and global society; and
- offer educators practical ways to translate the body of research that supports the cognitive and academic advantages of being bilingual into their teaching practices.

To view the standards and make this important instructional connection, see the **Hot Topics** section at <http://www.isbe.net/bilingual>.

ISBE to convene Summit for Bilingual Parents - May 20, 2006

In collaboration with state and educational leaders, the Illinois State Board of Education's Division of English Language Learning will convene a summit for bilingual parents on Saturday, May 20, 2006 at the Oak Brook Hills Marriott Resort, in Oakbrook, Illinois. Among other topics, summit participants will hear presentations from educational leaders and have an opportunity to:

- discuss the roles and responsibilities of Bilingual Parent Advisory Councils.
- learn about the laws and rights of bilingual/ESL programs.
- learn how parents can support their children outside school.
- learn how schools and districts are organized
- develop partnerships among schools, parents and neighborhood organizations
- learn about effective parent and school communication
- learn how to communicate with and influence school boards

For details, see HOT TOPICS at: <http://www.isbe.net/bilingual>. To register for the summit, see <http://www.thecenterweb.org>.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Art Contest

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Children's Drawing Contest "Este es mi México", the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Institute of Mexicans

Abroad, has extended a worldwide invitation to all children (between ages seven and 11) from to participate in this year's contest.

The purpose of this contest is to promote children's artistic abilities and imagination by drawing what Mexico means to them. The contest guidelines and the registration forms can be found at <http://www.consulmexchicago.com/>.

The deadline to send the drawings is May 31, 2006. The winners will be announced on July 20, 2006, at <http://www.sre.gob.mx/ime/> and <http://www.consulmexchicago.com/>.

Illinois residents should send drawings to:
Consulate General of Mexico
Education Department
204 S. Ashland Ave.
Chicago, IL 60607

Interested educators should call **Karina Tamez** at 312-738-2383 extension 124.

School Purchasing Network

CMS Statewide Contracts

School districts may use the statewide contracts awarded through the Dept of CMS for various commodities. Participation is optional and each district shall be solely responsible for any obligations incurred as a result of participation. Some of the more frequently requested statewide contracts include the following:

- Vehicles: multiple contracts (# 4012539 includes cars and passenger vans; # 4013447 includes cargo vans and pickups; and school buses are not currently available but a new contract is anticipated in early summer). CMS buyer is Brett Barnes, 217-785-3851.
- Bus Tires: contract # 4012758 (see line #37). CMS buyer is Dan O'Connell, 217-785-1659.
- Automatic External Defibrillator (AED): contract # 4013248. CMS buyer is Mary Kay Gonterman 217-785-3867.



The contracts are available online at www.purchase.state.il.us (click on Master Contracts and enter the contract # in the search box). Additional information is available from the CMS Buyers and CMS Help Desk, 1-866-455-2897.

Nutrition

Regional training sites for Local Wellness Policy Teams

The Illinois Nutrition Education and Training Program (NET) is a nonprofit program that assists schools in creating an environment that both promotes and supports children's health and achievement. Illinois NET Program will work with the Regional Superintendents to set up and provide regional training for Local Wellness Policy teams. ISBE distributed Local Wellness Policy Toolkits to districts in early February.

The Local Wellness Policy training covers the rationale for change, federal and state legislative requirements and use of the Local Wellness Policy Toolkit. Attendees will receive:

- a needs assessment and evaluation tool to help identify areas of need and plan for improvement
- a model wellness policy drafted by a consensus group of Illinois stakeholders to use as a template in policy development
- hands-on practice identifying foods/beverages that meet the HealthierUS School Challenge nutrition standards for a la carte and vended foods
- an opportunity to brainstorm on how to build awareness and support for your local wellness policy
- resources to help build awareness and support for local wellness policy
- an opportunity to meet for an optional one hour session after the training to initiate/continue local wellness policy work

Who Should Attend - Local Wellness Policy teams.

The Federal legislation requires parents, students, representatives of the school board, school administration, school food service staff and the public be involved in the development of the school wellness policy. We also recommend that teachers, curriculum coordinators and health professionals such as school nurses and community partners be involved in the policy development process.

Two CPDU credits will be provided.

Locations, Dates, Times

Lincoln Land Community College – Southern Region Education Center - Litchfield
Contact: 217-532-9591
March 7 – 9 a.m. to noon

Lincoln Land Community College – Southern Region Education Center - Litchfield
Contact: 217-532-9591
March 7 – 1 to 4 p.m.

North Cook County ISC #1, Continental Office Plaza
2340 Des Plaines River Road, Des Plaines
Download Registration form at
<http://www.ncisc.org/webpages/index1b.html>
March 16 – 8 to 11 a.m.

North Cook County ISC #1, Continental Office Plaza
2340 Des Plaines River Road, Des Plaines
Download Registration form at:
<http://www.ncisc.org/webpages/index1b.html>
March 16 - Noon to 3 p.m.

More locations will be coming soon!

Child Lures



The Illinois State Board of Education has created an online survey to get feedback about the Child Lures Prevention Initiative. The five-question survey, accessible via IWAS, asks four closed-ended questions about program implementation and asks respondents to rate the program on a five-point scale. We appreciate your taking the one or two minutes it will take to complete the survey.

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/060303.htm>