



Illinois State Board of Education

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Weekly Message

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August 29, 2005

Message from State Superintendent Randy J. Dunn

Good afternoon.

I'm going to spend some time over the next couple of days gathering my thoughts for remarks to our superintendents from around the state who will be gathered in Springfield later this week for ISBE's 28th Annual Superintendents' Conference.

Given both the theme of the conference and one of its signature events this year—Creating a Legacy through Leadership, highlighted by a special tour of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum on Thursday afternoon—I want to spend some time in my talk connecting Lincoln's life to notions of leadership that we can use on a daily basis.

I'm not quite sure yet what the arc of my comments will be (I mean, I have until Friday, right?), but I know that one of the themes I am going to weave into the speech has to do with our need to be ever-mindful of how we tend to our human resources—and not just our fiscal ones.

Richard Elmore, an education professor at Harvard, has referred to human resources as the “weakest dimension” of school system management, but one with the highest opportunity for adding value to a district. I couldn't agree more. It seems there could be numerous ways to act on this belief as a superintendent—but one in particular comes to mind for me...

We are coming into that time of year when Illinois school districts are getting about the business of adopting their budgets for FY06. For some, final approval has taken place—for others, adoption will come sometime in September.

It is always a challenge to set aside funds for staff professional development and other continuing education opportunities. I know that in some districts in our state, this is not done at all unless there is provision to do so as part of a state or federal grant program. We have to be willing to invest in our human capital if we have any hope of providing a sound education for all of our children—it is surely as important as paying the light bill or buying fuel for a school bus. When I was a local district superintendent, in relatively poor districts, I always tried to set aside some amount to make this “investment” in our staff. I hope many of you are able to do the same.

I know it's not always easy getting a district budget constructed and then defended to the community and then passed by the school board. But we have to be willing to provide at least some support to foster that most important

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resource we have for the kids we serve—the human resource represented by our teachers, administrators and other staff members. Thanks for letting me give my little sermon here...

A final note: Most school folks who have been working on this know that ISBE has been posting final (read, not “tentative” nor “preliminary”) AYP Status Reports on IWAS since July and informing districts how to access the reports. All District and School AYP Status Reports are considered final unless, for some reason, there are additional data errors that need to be corrected. In those cases, AYP Status Reports are regenerated and posted on IWAS. Any actions or services that may be triggered in a school or district should be undertaken once that final posting has taken place, not awaiting any other “official word” from the Agency. I still have been hearing some confusion in this regard.

Have a great week. I’m looking forward to seeing many of you in Springfield.

Randy Dunn

Data Analysis

SIS reporting deadline reminder



The SIS reporting deadline is September 30 and coincides with the Fall Housing deadline. SIS will eventually replace Fall Housing and we will have to have data by the last school day in September to align with the mandated reporting deadline.

Schoolhouse data corrections

We are very pleased to announce that the data correction process on SchoolHouse for the 2005 assessments has been completed. Thousands of personnel from local districts across the state have worked with ISBE and Pearson staff to correct, update and complete student data in order for districts to receive their AYP status earlier than in the past. This has been a huge task and accomplishment. Student Assessment wants to thank all the districts for their cooperation and efforts in completing this work.

District and school AYP status has been posted on IWAS. Test data will be sent in disk form to local districts before the end of September. For those enrolled on the Illinois Interactive Report Card, test information will be posted very soon.

With the change to Harcourt as our testing contractor, SchoolHouse will no longer be used in our testing data and material order process. In the next few weeks, superintendents will be receiving a letter from Harcourt announcing the process and training for ordering test materials on their online site called Spectrum.

Student Assessment

Illinois Alternate Assessment Training Workshops



Fall workshops for educators administering the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) begin August 30. To view the workshop schedule and register for a session, go to <http://iregister.measuredprogress.org>. Registration is available online through September 9, 2005.

For questions on the IAA, contact Marilyn Leveque at mleveque@isbe.net or 217-782-4823.

Accountability

Parents Right-To-Know



Each superintendent in the state will be receiving a notice of "Parents Right-to-Know" letter and a Sample Letter that may be used to send to parents. This will be mailed out early the week of August 29, 2005.

This is required of any school or district that receives Title I funds.

NCLB

Electronic NCLB programs monitoring instrument available

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) announces the launch of the Electronic NCLB Programs



Monitoring Instrument through the IWAS system. In an effort to provide greater assistance to districts concerning NCLB audit/monitoring visits in FY06, the division of External Assurance has created a resource that will allow districts to assess their own level of compliance with NCLB program requirements. The new resource includes links to the rules and regulations governing the NCLB programs.

The monitoring instrument identifies example documents available through the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) Website. Instructions for completing the instrument are on the External Assurance Website. Should you have questions regarding this new feature contact **Paul Williams** at 217-782-7970 or email to pwilliam@isbe.net.

Additionally, another new electronic resource is being launched for the annual NCLB Title I Comparability analysis. The new electronic form will take the worry out of many of the calculations and should save considerable time and effort normally required to determine comparability. The forms can be submitted electronically and are also available through the IWAS system. Instructions on completing and filing your comparability analysis are available on line at the External Assurance Web site or in the IWAS system. Direct your questions to **Paul Williams** at 217/782-7970 or email pwilliam@isbe.net.

Legal

Enrollment of immigrant students

The following information is provided to help districts fulfill administrative duties without infringing upon children’s educational rights.

The immigration status of the parent or child has no bearing on the rights of the students to enroll. The laws of Illinois and the United States guarantee all students, including immigrant students, access to a free public education from kindergarten through grade twelve up until the age of twenty-one regardless of immigrant status. This requires every district to guarantee illegal alien students equal access to the full range of programs and resources.

Districts enrollment procedures might violate immigrant students’ right to equal

educational access. Immigrant students are entitled to the same access as nonimmigrant students. Equal access is influenced by admission policies adopted at the district level and implemented at the school level. The law prohibits any action which might have a "chilling" effect on the right of access to schools. Districts must not require parents or adult care-takers to provide information concerning their or their children's immigration status. When implementing residency policies, care must be taken to ensure that parents or adult caretakers can establish residency within the district by means which will not force them to, albeit indirectly, reveal their immigration status. Policies or procedures which condition services or benefits by requiring a child's or a parent's Visa, Green Card or Social Security number must be amended because these practices have the effect of exposing the immigration status of undocumented students or their parents. School districts should continue to determine whether a student resides in its district, but do not have an affirmative duty to delve into a child’s immigration status and indeed pursuant to a 1981 United States Supreme Court case should not. (See *Plyler v. Doe*). Thus, districts may accept as proof of residency, but cannot mandate, that parents or adult caretakers provide either a Visa, “Green Card,” Illinois driver’s license or a state identification card which require Social Security numbers.

Residence in the school district is sufficient to entitle school age immigrant children, including foreign exchange students, to attend school on a tuition free basis. Once an immigrant student of proper age and residency seeks admission to school in the district, the student has an immediate legal right to attend school on a tuition-free basis with other students. The only factor in determining whether to charge tuition should be whether or not the child is a resident in that school district under Section 10-20.12b(a) of the School Code. The residence of the parents or other proper enrolling custodian is considered to be the residence of the minor child. Residency may be established with information documenting that shows that the child’s parent or other proper enrolling custodian is actually living within the district—for example, a lease, addressed mail, utility bill, a letter or affidavit stating the facts about residency.

It is not uncommon, among immigrant families, to find children who do not live in the same household as their parents. To safeguard immigrant students'



right to a free public education, LEAs must not conclude that children, who live within the district, but apart from their parents, must be charged tuition as if they were non-residents. An immigrant student who is living with someone other than her parent has a right to tuition-free education through the local district, provided that the child is not in the district for the sole purpose of attending school at the district.

Even when it's undisputed that a child resides in the district, but questionable whether the child lives apart from the parent simply to access educational programs, districts must not apply inflexible rules to determine residency. Districts cannot mandate adult caretakers or relatives with whom a child lives to establish legal guardianship as a condition for gaining access to the district's schools. Districts may require reasonable assurance from the responsible adult caretaker that they accept responsibility for the child and that while exercising control, care and support over the child, will provide him with a regular fixed night-time abode. This may be done through a letter or affidavit.

Social Security numbers are not required to determine eligibility for free or reduced lunch.

Schools are required to provide undocumented immigrant students the same benefits and services made available to other students. Therefore, when determining eligibility for free or reduced lunch and/or breakfast programs under the School Lunch Act, do not reject applications which do not have the parent's Social Security number. Parents without Social Security numbers need only indicate on the application that they do not have a number. Districts must make it clear that any and all information provided is used solely to obtain federal funds.

LEAs have no legal obligation to enforce immigration laws. School personnel, especially building principals and those involved in student intake activities, have no legal obligation to enforce U.S. immigration laws. Conversely, the Immigration and Naturalization Service has no legal authority to determine or infringe on district residency policies.

Funds may be available for districts with a large number of immigrant students. Districts heavily affected by the enrollment of immigrant students (documented and undocumented) may qualify for Federal Emergency Immigrant Education Program funds through the State Board and should take full advantage of them. Districts may also be eligible for funding through the State Transitional Bilingual

Education Program for limited English speakers or the federal Title VII program. Contact 312-814-3850 if you want to inquire about the availability of funds under these programs.

Funding and Disbursements



General State Aid – Hold Harmless update

General State Aid is a multi-variable formula dependent on timely submission of data from a variety of sources. An important component of this formula is the Equalized Assessed Valuations which originate from your local county clerk's office. All county clerks are required to submit this data to the Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR). IDOR performs an extensive audit of this information, certifies it and passes it on to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for use in calculating General State Aid (GSA) and Hold Harmless (HH). Historically, IDOR certifies all 102 Illinois county files and electronically delivers it to ISBE by July 1 of each year.

IDOR has not provided ISBE with final certified data from Cook County. Consequently, ISBE will not be able to fully pay HH amounts nor load final GSA payments until certified data has been received. ISBE will have to resort to estimated data for Cook County in order to distribute the first few installments of GSA as well as a prorated share of HH. HH will be prorated at 80 percent and vouchered next week with the balance paid when final figures are determined.

ISBE will notify you as soon as we have final data to finalize GSA and HH for FY 2006.

Final FY 06 Title I allocations complete

The final FY 06 Title I Allocations for all local education agencies (LEAs) are complete and can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/excel/TitleI_allocations06.xls

Funding is based upon LEA eligibility for the four statutory formulas—Basic, Concentration, Targeted and Education Finance Incentive Grants; and upon a variable hold harmless. These figures replace the earlier projected allocations. To access any increases in funds, an LEA must submit a Title I amendment to the Illinois State Board of Education

prior to obligating or expending the additional funds. Information on final allocations for Titles IIA, IID, IV and V will be forthcoming.

English Language Learning

ACCESS for ELLs™ webpage now available

The web page for Assessing Comprehension and Communications in English State to State for English Language Learners (ACCESS for ELLs™) is now up and running!

School districts with English Language Learners or incoming potentially limited English proficient students should prepare their school communities, program directors, administrators, teachers and students for the new secure English language proficiency test called ACCESS for ELLs™ and its screener WIDA ACCESS Placement Screener (W-APT).

Training for district personnel who will be administering ACCESS for ELLs™ is already under way or being scheduled. Training is important because the assessment includes individually administered components which require the test administrators to be ACCESS certified. Preparing for the first administration of the test will require districts to set time aside to schedule teacher training for staff that will administer ACCESS for ELLs™. Districts will also need to plan and prepare for the spring statewide secure administration of ACCESS for ELLs™.

Approved by the Illinois Advisory Council on Bilingual Education, ACCESS for ELLs™ is scheduled to be administered to all ELL students between January 30 and March 10, 2006. To help districts access information about the tests, prepare for staff training and meet planning needs, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Division of English Language Learning has developed the ACCESS for ELLs™ webpage.

All the current information and related links on the new English language proficiency test are available to the public. Districts are encouraged to visit <http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/access.htm> for additional information on:

- background history;

- the certification process and who can administer the test;
- district training and assessment resources;
- and other critical links.

Additional information about related professional development opportunities scheduled for September 15, 2005 can be found at:

http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/pdfs/elp_registration.pdf

A more comprehensive calendar of learning opportunities can be found at:

http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/htmls/bil_calendar.htm

For scheduling and planning purposes related to the ACCESS for ELLs™ educators may wish to check <http://www.isbe.net/assessment/PDF/Chart2006.pdf> for a 2006 chart of Illinois assessments.

Legislative update



The end of August brings final action on bills on the Governor's desk. Since our last Legislative update two weeks ago, a number of bills have been signed or vetoed by the Governor, summaries of which you will find below.

Please refer to <http://www.isbe.net/legislative.htm> for a more complete description of each piece of legislation. Additionally, if you would like to access the full text for any piece of legislation, go to <http://www.ilga.gov/> on the left hand side of the page, you can search for legislation by bill number. For a House Bill, type in HB and the bill number (ex: HB 1) or for a Senate Bill, type in SB and the bill number (ex: SB 1). The bill status page for that particular legislation will come up. Click on "full text" to see the entire bill.

Nutrition

Mandates require additional schools to operate school breakfast



This past winter, the Childhood Hunger Relief Act was signed requiring more Illinois schools to implement a breakfast program. It stipulates that schools in which at least 40 percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches must also provide a breakfast meal. To determine which schools/sites are mandated to operate the School Breakfast Program, go to

http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/schools_mandated_operate_sbp.pdf To view the full text of the legislation, go to <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/93/hb/09300hb07561v.htm>

For *Frequently Asked Questions and Answers on the New Breakfast Mandate*, please visit <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/> to download the April issue of the newsletter, *The Outlook*, pages 2 and 3.

KidsFest just weeks away

Have you made arrangements to attend the *KidsFest* event at St. Charles on October 14 or 15? It is free and loads of fun; including activities, healthy snacking and excitement. Visit <http://www.kidseatwell.org> for further information including free field trips, parking and more!

One of Illinois' own named president of the School Nutrition Association

Ruth Jonen, Director of Food Service for Township High School District 211 in Palatine, Illinois has been named the 58th president of the School Nutrition Association (SNA). Jonen has served in a variety of leadership positions within the child nutrition arena at both the state and national levels, including president of the Illinois School Food Service Association. She is credentialed as a School Foodservice and Nutrition Specialist (SFNS.) Jonen was named president at the final session of the SNA conference in Baltimore, Maryland in July 2005 and will serve through July 2006. Congratulations to Ruth. Thank you for making Illinois proud!

Professional Development

National dropout prevention network conference

The seventeenth annual National Dropout Prevention Network Conference will be held October 15 through 19, at the Santa Clara Marriott in Santa Clara, California. For more information regarding the conference please visit <http://www.edualliance.org/2005/readytolearn/>

Grant and Scholarship opportunities

Have you ever developed a dream list for your school's food service, nutrition and health-related program and services? Start fresh this year, be optimistic and consider applying for grant funds and/or scholarships. This is an opportune time to think about grant writing. Share this information with anyone in your school or school district looking for grant funds related to nutrition, health, wellness and more!

- <http://www.fdncenter.org> —The Foundation Center
- <http://www.iahperd.org> —Illinois Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, the IAPHERD Endowment Fund
- <http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/3food.htm> —grants for individuals, food science, hospitality
- <http://www.isfsa.net> —Illinois School Nutrition Association SMART BUDDY scholarship
- http://www.schoolgrants.org/grant_opps.htm —School Grants

Review your knowledge on writing grants with the *Education Grants 101—Knowing Where to Begin* material at http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/where_to_begin.htm

External Vacancy List

Please visit <http://www.isbe.net/hr/pdf/VL05-21.pdf> to view a list of vacancies at the Illinois State Board of Education. Please note that at the end of this list there is also a link to our ongoing vacancy list.

In the News

Weekly news clips

Last week's education news clips are posted at <http://www.isbe.net/news/2005/newsclips/050826.htm>

