

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD *Newsbulletin*

January 2009 / Issue No. 681

Survey identifies ramifications to schools from economic slump

In late 2008, in response to the recent economic downturn, the American Association of School Administrators examined the impact on school districts across the nation. While there are regional differences, the findings of AASA's Economic Impact Survey demonstrate that districts in every part of the country are experiencing the economic recession.

It is also clear that schools in increasing numbers are confronted by the looming financial crisis that threatens the progress schools have made and the stability they have enjoyed in the past.

When superintendents were asked to identify what actions their districts have considered as a result of the economic downturn:

- Seventy-four percent have already implemented or plan to implement a reduction in staff-level hiring
- Seventy-nine percent have already implemented or plan to implement a policy of altering thermostats to reduce heating and cooling in buildings
- Eighty percent have already implemented or plan to implement the elimination of some staff travel

The condition of the schools in a community is an excellent barometer for measuring the condition of the community, according to AASA. The economic downturn reported by school administrators is paralleled by more subtle impacts on the community. When schools curtail their spending through measures such as reducing payroll, conserving energy use, reducing fuel consumption, deferring maintenance, and delaying purchases, the local community feels the effect. For many small communities, schools are a major employer as well as a reliable source of revenue, and cuts to school spending mean cuts to community revenue.

When superintendents were asked about the economic-related problems of the families of students in their district:

- Eighty-eight percent say mortgage foreclosures have worsened somewhat or a great deal
- Ninety-five percent say unemployment has worsened somewhat or a great deal
- Ninety-one percent say student

See **AASA** on page 4

Illinois school boards well represented at key lobby event in nation's capital: FRN Conference

The annual lobbying effort by school board leaders, known as the 36th Annual FRN Conference, is scheduled in Washington, D.C., on Feb. 1-3. Organizers say it is the only national meeting that offers school board members the inside track on public education advocacy.

School board members from across the country learn in-depth information at the Federal Relations Network about legislative issues and then lobby their members of Congress on Capitol Hill.

Last year more than 900 school board members, superintendents and state association staff, representing 48 states and the Virgin Islands participated.

Key aims of FRN this year include:

- increasing the federal investment in education
- advocating for NSBA's recommendations to improve the No Child Left Behind Act
- advocating for NSBA's recommendations for improving federal pro-

See **FRN** on page 5

On the inside

IASB provides awards for service	Page 5
Board candidate training set	Page 8
New school laws	Page 11

IASB publishes
**new Good School
 Maintenance manual**

Page 3

Summer meals program law mandates take effect

Public Act 095-0155, signed into law on Aug. 14, 2007, amends the Childhood Hunger Relief Act (105 ILCS 126/20) to require summer school lunch and/or breakfast programs in many school districts. Specifically it requires that a school district must, in all schools in which 50 percent or more of the student population is eligible for free or reduced-price meals AND that have a summer school program, implement a summer breakfast and/or lunch program for the duration of the summer school program.

This amendment applies to all schools that meet the above criteria, including those that do not now participate in any of the Federal Nutrition Programs. The legislation, along with questions and answers, are accessible at <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition> on either the National School Lunch Program or Summer Food Service Program web page under *Summer Mandate*.

Staff from the Nutrition Programs Division is available at 800/545-7892 to offer technical assistance with this new legislation.

State superintendent Koch is on transition task force

State Superintendent of Education Christopher Koch serves on the presidential transition task force. Koch and education officials around the country are examining issues the next U.S. Secretary of Education should address in the first 100 days.

The group is called the Council of Chief State School Officers Presidential Transition Task Force. Its first meeting was held on Dec. 1 in Washington, D.C.

Koch became state superintendent in 2006 and has been with the Illinois State Board of Education since 1994.

News magazine ranks 57 Illinois high schools among nation's best

U.S. News and World Report recently listed 57 Illinois high schools among the nation's "best" high schools when using data that gives greater weight to a school's disadvantaged population performance on state tests.

Here's how *U.S. News* describes the process it used to choose the winning schools:

"We analyzed 21,069 public high schools in 48 states using data from the 2006-2007 school year. This is the total number of public high schools in each state that had grade-12 enrollment and sufficient data to analyze primarily for the 2006-2007 school year. A three-step process determined the best high schools. The first two steps ensured that the schools serve all their students well, using state proficiency standards as the measuring benchmarks. For those schools that made it past the first two steps, a third step assessed the degree to which schools prepare students for college-level work."

It is clear that some schools that don't offer Advanced Placement classes were on the list, which some say is

hard to understand because one of the criteria used to rank the schools was the number of A.P. classes students had taken.

Galesburg CUSD 205 Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Joel Estes says that, at least in comparing itself with other schools, award-winning Galesburg High School was already at the head of the class. "A couple of years ago, when we went to the Coalition of Illinois High Schools and found out that, when we compared Galesburg High School to schools in the State of Illinois with similar demographics and size, that we're absolutely at the top of the heap in the achievement of our students in reading, math, and science," Estes said.

The magazine also recognized 56 other Illinois high schools throughout the state with that same distinction.

For more details, including the list of schools recognized, visit the magazine's web site at: <http://www.usnews.com/sections/education/high-schools/>.

IASB hosting February Leadership Conference

IASB's Leadership Conference is set for Feb. 27-28 at the Hyatt Regency, Chicago. IASB leaders have been receiving information detailing the meeting schedule and events and have been asked to complete the registration and housing forms as soon as possible.

Each division is invited to send four or more officers (division chair, vice chair, director and resolutions chair). Other division officers may attend as well.

For more information, please contact Carla Bolt at 217/528-9688, ext. 1140 or email cbolt@iasb.com.

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Illinois Association of School Boards

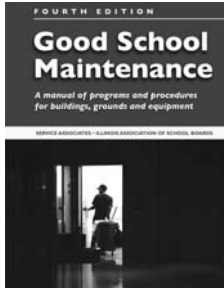
This newsletter is published monthly by the Illinois Association of School Boards for member boards of education and their superintendents. The Illinois Association of School Boards, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, is a voluntary association of local boards of education and is not affiliated with any branch of government.

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IASB publishes new edition of school maintenance manual

Good School Maintenance has been a bible for thousands of physical plant managers since it was first published by the Illinois Association of School Boards in 1976. IASB has now published a new, fourth edition of its best-selling book, last updated in 1996. The new edition of this school maintenance manual provides updated programs and procedures for maintenance of buildings, grounds and equipment, and is expanded to address an even wider range of issues.



It covers the basics of managing a maintenance program, how computers and technology fit in to such a program, how to organize maintenance work, grounds maintenance, area cleaning programs, custodial procedures and services, and virtually all kinds of mechanical equipment.

In addition, *Good School Maintenance* now provides guidance for policy makers and managers in planning and evaluating their maintenance efforts. The book is a product of dozens of subject-area experts whose work has been coordinated by Senior Editor James B. Fritts, the author of another IASB best-seller, *Essentials of Illinois School Finance*.

The 300-page manual serves as both a basic training tool for staff and a guide for managers in planning, conducting and evaluating maintenance programs. It also functions as a reference source for information on specific maintenance tasks and concerns.

The manual is divided into five sections that cover:

- the basics of organizing programs for maintaining buildings, grounds

and equipment, including the use of technology in controlling building operations and dealing with health, safety and environmental challenges

- cleaning programs and related custodial services for all areas of the school building, including specific procedures, safety and environmental concerns and a review of equipment and supplies
- programs for maintaining the building itself and all related equipment, including mechanical systems for heating and cooling, plumbing and electrical systems, and sewage treatment plants
- grounds management, including trees and shrubs, lawns, paving and athletic surfaces
- an extensive appendix of management tools, including a lengthy set of guidelines and forms for conducting annual inspections. All forms in the appendix are designed to be copied and used, with or without modification

It also is profusely illustrated with newly updated artwork and contains many useful tables for ready reference.

The book concludes with an index arranged alphabetically by subject, a new feature with the Fourth Edition designed to help the user locate all relevant information on specific topics. The book is also drilled so it can be inserted in three-ring binders along with other maintenance reference materials.

Good School Maintenance is available from IASB Publications, 2921 Baker Drive, Springfield, IL 62703. Telephone 217/528-9688, extension 1108; fax 217/528-2831. Price is \$50 (\$40 for IASB members) plus \$5 per order for shipping. The book also may be purchased through the Association's online bookstore: <http://iasb.com/shop/>

Sustainable schools topic of symposium on 'green' practices

Want to learn how to make your school or school district more sustainable by implementing a variety of green practices and programs? Plan to attend the 2009 Sustainable Schools Symposium on Feb. 27. It will be held at Joliet Central High School and presented by the State of Illinois Green Governments Coordinating Council.

Speakers and workshops will cover topics such as sustainable school facility planning and site decisions, green facilities management, sustainable renovation and construction, and energy efficiency and conservation, environmental education and service learning, water conservation, waste reduction, and sustainable school transportation.

Register online at <http://www.GreenSolutions.il.gov>. On-site registration begins at 9 a.m. The event will also feature facility tours that will run from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., along with a complementary continental breakfast and lunch.

The symposium is an opportunity to exchange ideas with peers and identify new programs to apply. Suggested symposium participants include school and district administrators, regional superintendents, school board members, facilities managers and staff, teachers, school health practitioners, facility planners and architects, community advocates, and high school student environmental leaders.

Topics on the agenda include:

- greening renovations
- transportation
- greening curriculum standards
- siting decisions
- water... best practices
- waste, recycling and composting

For more information, contact: Jon Zirkle, Office of Lt. Governor Pat Quinn; Phone: 312/814-2094; Email: Jonathon.Zirkle@Illinois.gov.

mobility has increased somewhat or a great deal

Given the inelastic nature of school district budgets and the difficult financial times, superintendents have a tough role to play in cutting costs to meet shrinking budgets. Belt tightening measures are already underway and survey responses suggest that further cuts are inevitable in areas directly influencing instruction and student learning.

The survey responses indicate that, in the face of painful choices, superintendents are proactively engaging the community in the decision-making process. The three most common methods for reaching expenditure-reducing decisions, the AASA survey found, were:

- Discussions with the superintendent's cabinet (81 percent of responders)
- Discussions at open school board meetings (70 percent of responders) and
- Discussions in school board committees (56 percent of responders)

The seven most frequently selected actions taken in response to the economic downturn, reported as already implemented, are listed below. The following list was essentially the same regardless of whether it concerned urban, suburban or rural districts.

- Altering thermostats (62 percent)
- Eliminating non-essential travel (57 percent)
- Reducing staff-level hiring (48 percent)
- Reducing consumable supplies (48 percent)
- Increasing class size (36 percent)
- Deferring maintenance (36 percent)
- Reducing instructional material (35 percent)

Again across all respondents, while not yet implemented or on a delayed implementation status, the following three actions were ranked highest by superintendents.

- Freezing outside professional service contacts (30 percent)
- Laying off personnel (30 percent)
- Eliminating outside staff development consultants (30 percent)

Overall, responses to the *Economic Impact Survey* conducted by AASA reflected a general sense of pragmatism among superintendents and an acceptance of the need

to tighten budgets and implement moderate changes. Given that the budget for the 2008-09 school year was passed before the economic downturn, many responders indicated that the adjustments made to their current budget are very moderate when compared to the cuts superintendents expected to see in their upcoming school budget discussions.

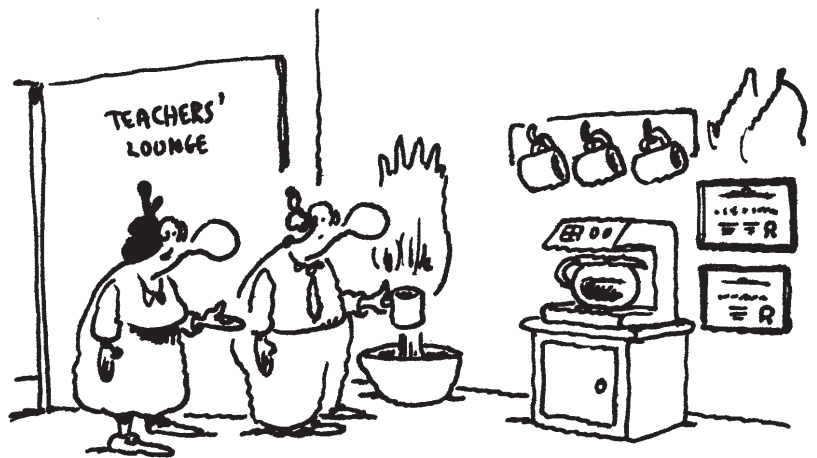
AASA eyes overdue projects to boost U.S. economy, repair school buildings

Illinois public schools have a list of ready-to-go construction and renovation projects that, with an infusion of federal economic stimulus funds, would work to both stimulate a stagnating economy and improve the educational environment for children, according to a national survey of school superintendents released in December by the American Association of School Administrators (AASA).

Almost 800 superintendents from 48 different states completed the AASA *Opportunity for Federal Education Funding Survey*. Nationally the survey identified \$6.52 billion in ready-to-go new construction projects and \$4.49 billion in ready-to-go renovation and repair projects. The survey also identified \$328.6 million in ready-to-go new construction projects in Illinois, and \$269.8 million in ready-to-go

renovation and repair projects in the state.

AASA administered the survey to superintendents nationwide in December to learn how school districts would spend one-time block-grant funds, if they were to become available as part of an economic stimulus package. Almost all respondents (99 percent) identified budget gaps to which they could direct stimulus money, and 97 percent identified short-term projects that could be placed in the bid market in 60-90 days. The survey found the top four projects related to facilities that responders would address with the stimulus funds are building repair (68 percent of all respondents), building renovation (59 percent), security measures (57 percent) and deferred school construction projects (46 percent).



"Actually, this one's a Dr. Coffee."

NSBA seeks federal stimulus funds for school repairs

School board lobbyists with the National School Boards Association (NSBA) say their top federal funding priorities for the next fiscal year are to secure substantial increases for two mandated programs. The two programs are also the largest sources of federal funding for school districts, namely:

- Title I grants: the main source of funding for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act / Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)
- IDEA grants: special education funding under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act

NSBA also is urging the enactment of a federal economic stimulus pack-

age that will provide grants to school districts for infrastructure repairs and modernization. This source of targeted funding, according to NSBA backers, would help advance student achievement, provide contracting opportunities for businesses, and create thousands of jobs throughout the country.

Moreover, supporters say federal grants for school infrastructure provided through an economic stimulus could be used immediately because many projects have already been approved in a number of states that await the necessary funding.

Funding for these programs and education overall has remained relatively flat for the last several years as Congress and the Administration have

invested in other priorities, and funding is tens of billions of dollars below what Congress authorized.

The House and Senate passed a conference agreement for FY09 that provides approximately \$94.3 billion for education and related programs, which is \$8.4 billion more than the former President's budget request for education, training, employment and social services programs.

However, if Congress does not pass a final appropriations bill for education and related programs, the likelihood of a short-term continuing resolution that would maintain current FY 2008 funding levels for domestic programs is possible, until the next Congress finalizes FY 2009 appropriations.

FRN from page 1

grams aimed at strengthening teacher quality

- ensuring school-based Medicaid reimbursements
- pursuing a greater emphasis on early childhood education.

Attending the conference this year from Illinois are four IASB officers and five other school board representatives, plus four Association staff members. IASB officers include: President Mark C. Metzger, Vice President Joseph T. Alesandrini, Past President Marie Slater, and Chicago District 299 representative Tariq Butt.

Other school board representatives are: Joliet District 86 board vice president Michael E. Kelly, East Maine District 63 board vice president John C. Jekot, chief of staff to the Chicago District 299 school board Steve Washington, Chicago District 299 board president Rufus Williams, and former IASB President Christy Coleman, who is a board member from Geneseo CUSD 228.

Staff members in the entourage include: IASB Executive Director Mike Johnson, Deputy Executive Director

Michael Bartlett, Director of Editorial Services Linda Dawson, and Assistant Director of Governmental Relations Susan Hilton.

Like all FRN conference participants, the Illinois delegates to Washington will spend an entire day meeting with their U.S. Senators and Representatives in the lawmakers' Washington, D.C. offices on Feb. 3. They will be presenting IASB's and NSBA's legislative agenda to the Congress.

Specifically they will be asking for a \$2.5 billion increase for Title I grants for disadvantaged students and a \$2.5 billion increase for special education. They will also push for congressional support for H.R. 648, submitted by Rep. Don Young (R-AK-At Large), which fully tracks all of NSBA's recommendations. An overview of the federal legislation's key provisions can be found online at: <http://www.nsba.org/MainMenu/Advocacy/FederalLaws/NCLB/NCLBCampaign/QuickReferenceGuide.aspx>.

For more information about the FRN event, visit: <http://www.nsba.org/SecondaryMenu/FRN/2009Conference.aspx>.

Awards available to recognize excellence in service to education

IASB annually recognizes people and organizations whose actions have contributed to excellence in education producing an impact statewide. Recognition is provided through the Harold P. Seamon Award for Distinguished Service to public education. Nominations are sought from now through April 15.

Recipients must have done one or more of the following: displayed exceptional service and commitment; provided innovative approaches to meeting school challenges; or enhanced local governance by boards.

In addition, *IASB Honorary Memberships for Exceptional Service* are awarded for rendering great service to IASB or to public education.

Finally, there is the *IASB Service Award* for 25 years of service producing a positive impact through a close affiliation with and direct service to schools.

Submit nominations to: IASB Awards Committee Liaison, 2921 Baker Drive, Springfield, IL 62703-5929, phone IASB, ext. 1139, or fax 217/753-2485.

Blagojevich impeachment trial may drag on for weeks

School grant funds held up in paralyzing process

The impeachment trial of Gov. Rod Blagojevich in the Illinois State Senate could drag on for a number of weeks, according to Ben Schwarm, IASB associate executive director of governmental relations.

The Illinois House of Representatives voted unanimously to impeach Gov. Blagojevich on Jan. 8, acting on the recommendation of a House committee established three weeks earlier to begin an investigation of the actions of the governor. Gov. Blagojevich had been arrested in early December by federal agents on charges of conspiring to implement “pay to play” schemes regarding state contracts and Illinois’ then-open U.S. Senate seat.

House Speaker Michael Madigan created the Special Investigative Committee to look into the conduct of the governor and make a recommendation as to whether cause existed for impeachment. House Resolution 1650 (Madigan, D-Chicago), contained the proposal to establish the committee, which was approved on a 113-0 vote.

The House committee consisted of 12 Democrats – chaired by House Majority Leader Barbara Flynn Currie (D-Chicago) – and nine Republicans. The committee held its first meeting on Dec. 16, and although no firm timeline was set for the conclusion of the committee’s work, the goal was to finish before the new 96th Illinois General Assembly was to be sworn in on Jan. 14, 2009.

Because the Illinois House has voted for impeachment, the next step is for a trial to be conducted in the Illinois Senate. The Senate passed a resolution on Dec. 16 to create a “Special Committee on Impeachment Trial Procedures.” Senate Resolution 966 (Cullerton, D-Chicago) was approved on a vote of 56-0. The committee consists of nine members: five appointed by the Senate President and four



House Speaker Michael Madigan presides over the Jan. 8 vote to impeach the governor.

appointed by the Senate Minority Leader. Senator James Clayborne (D-E.St. Louis) is chairing the committee.

‘Business as usual’ for embattled governor

Despite his recent arrest and most major Illinois politician calling for his resignation and impeachment, Gov. Blagojevich has continued a “busi-



Gov. Blagojevich declares his innocence and keeps his distance from reporters.

ness as usual” attitude, going in to his office to work every day. In fact, the governor signed numerous bills into law in December and appointed a new

U.S. Senator to replace President Barack Obama.

If Blagojevich does not resign, however, it is possible for the current situation to drag on, unresolved, for weeks or even months. The Illinois legislature is virtually paralyzed in the meantime, because no substantive action will take place under the Capitol dome at a time when lawmakers will not work directly on any issue with this governor, Schwarm said.

Meanwhile the state faces a difficult time, according to Schwarm. “Short-term borrowing is on hold at

There are also problems for schools. School districts have not been receiving promised state grant payments, except for direct state aid...

a time when Illinois’ unpaid bills are piling up, largely because of investor uncertainty over who, if anyone, will be running Illinois state government,” Schwarm said.

There are also problems for schools. School districts have not been receiving promised state grant payments, except for direct state aid, and a much-needed statewide infrastructure program is on hold as well. The infrastructure bonding program, gridlocked for years, is likely to be held up indefinitely now that the governor has been formally charged with corrupt practices and is refusing to resign.

Gov. Blagojevich also refused to file an answer to impeachment charges as the Senate had directed. A spokesman for Sen. President John Cullerton said that, as a result, a plea of “not guilty” would be entered for him. Meanwhile his lawyers have pulled out of his upcoming impeachment trial.

NEWS HEADLINES

Aledo (Dec. 15, *Quad Cities Times*) The newly organized Aledo-Westmer consolidated school board has been split in two key leadership votes. The first vote involved selection of a school board president and the second the naming of an interim superintendent. Both decisions were made on 4-3 votes. Voters approved a school district consolidation plan in November creating the new district.

Chicago (Nov. 29, *Chicago Sun-Times*) A Chicago District 299 investigation into alleged paddling of student athletes by high school coaches was widened to include a fifth school, while several coaches have been disciplined over the matter. The most recent controversy involved allegations of paddling of football team members by a football coach. The probe was triggered last year after alleged paddling of team members by a volleyball coach came to light. The coach resigned, and students at other schools came forward.

Danville (Dec. 2, *Champaign News-Gazette*) There were no boycotts or pickets at Danville High School or the district administration building on Dec. 1. This after a call by a small group of people who wanted to protest claims that a head coach had unfairly cut students from a basketball team. Demonstration planners said they decided to forgo the demonstration after the district agreed to further investigate the allegations.

Morris (Dec. 10, *Morris Daily Herald*) Morris District 54 sees an agreement on extension of the city's current Tax Increment Financing plan as a 'good deal' for the local schools. The school board approved the deal worked out between the Morris grade and high schools and the city of Morris regarding a 12-year extension of the city's current TIF. Under the deal, schools will get a big-

ger share of the tax increment accruing from local development without losing much in state aid. Before the new agreement, District 54 received about 6 percent a year as its part of TIF returns. With the new agreement, the city is offering up to 50 percent of TIF revenue.

Naperville (Nov. 25, *Naperville Sun*) Indian Prairie District 204 will offer six additional online courses for the 2009-2010 school year. Nearly 4,000 students from Illinois school districts are enrolled in Illinois Virtual High School. District 204 is itself offering its own health course online and sees online courses as a way to appeal to the needs of nontraditional students.

O'Fallon (Dec. 15, *Suburban Journals*) The school board for Central District 104 in O'Fallon is vowing to take whatever legal means it has at its disposal to stop a proposed Tax Increment Financing district from becoming a reality. The board passed a resolution Dec. 15 that said: "the TIF will increase the property tax burden for existing residential and commercial properties" and set "a precedent for future TIFs throughout the boundaries of Central School District 104."

Oswego (Dec. 11, *Ledger Sentinel*) A former board member has been appointed to rejoin the school board on an interim basis, but the Dec. 8 selection is now under review by the regional school superintendent. Joe Guinnane, a former president of the Oswego board, is expected to rejoin the board soon to fill the vacancy created by the recent resignation of Andy Wood. A permanent replacement for Wood will be chosen by voters at the next school board election on April 7, 2009.

Peoria (Dec. 15, *The Journal Star*) Peoria District 150 recently rejected a proposed tax levy and may

have a large financial gap to close soon. On Dec. 15 the board rejected a proposed 2008 tax levy, which requested about \$3.4 million more than last year, or a 5.6 percent increase. The 4-3 vote came less than a month after the board approved what amounted to a tax rate increase of 9.8 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. District Treasurer Guy Cahill said the proposed increase in the total levy came about primarily through an increase in the district's tort fund, or liability insurance fund, which he said had been under funded in previous years but "masked" while its expenses were commingled with the education and building funds. A change in state law requires separate accounting.

Rockford (Dec. 2, *Rockford Register-Star*) Washington Academy students are part of a local push for "No Idle Zone," a program created by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to recognize the effects on air quality of idling engines, particularly in school zone areas. The program officially starts in February and aims to motivate drivers to turn off their engines rather than idle for long periods of time.

Statewide (Dec. 15, *Education Week*) Illinois schools chief Christopher A. Koch, who has served in a variety of roles since coming to the department in 1994, has seen his agency whittled down in size, from 900 workers last decade to 477 now. No one in the agency is a content specialist, and the agency is sometimes criticized for not having enough staff to monitor local districts. He said he has trouble recruiting data specialists to Springfield because job options—and earnings potential—are better in the private sector in Chicago. If there are more agency budget cuts in response to the current economic recession, Koch said, he's going to have to resort to layoffs.

State board website provides 'Diploma Project' answers

There are lingering questions among school administrators about the American Diploma Project (ADP) and the Illinois State Board of Education's efforts to examine the Illinois Learning Standards for high school students in English language arts, mathematics and science. What is behind the ADP, for example, and why is it pertinent for Illinois schools?

To answer these questions, the agency has developed a resource on their website devoted to ADP that can be accessed at <http://www.isbe.net/ADP/default.htm>. The site explains that ADP is a collaboration of school leaders from more than 30 states aimed at reviewing and revising standards regarding what students need to know and do to succeed in college and careers.



What students need to study to do well in college is up for review.

ISBE will be using the national benchmarks from ADP to refocus the Illinois Learning Standards to make them more rigorous and easier to understand.

The Illinois Learning Standards were developed in 1997 and have not undergone a revision since their adoption. ISBE is undertaking a review and revision process now to ensure that the learning standards for kindergarten through grade 12 are aligned to postsecondary and work expectations and meet national and international expectations as expressed by the ADP benchmarks.

"We are also reviewing learning standards from multiple perspectives," said State Superintendent of Education Christopher Koch. "For example, we are reviewing them against 21st Century skills and benchmarks to ensure that they adequately address the application of learning, critical thinking skills, and other components," Koch said.

IASB to offer school board candidate training in every division

School board candidates from around the state are encouraged to attend one of the many candidate forums sponsored this spring by the Illinois Association of School Boards. IASB divisions will be hosting the candidate forums, most in connection with their spring division meetings.

These forums are specifically designed to begin to acquaint prospective school board members with the principles of effective governance and the roles and responsibilities of Illinois public school board members. IASB encourages current school board members and superintendents to reach out to candidates in their

region and invite them to attend.

"Newly elected candidates will want to hit the ground running upon their election to the board. These candidate forums are just the first step in providing training to these new officials," said IASB Director of Field Services Larry Dirks. Once seated on the board, school board members will have many opportunities to attend new board member training on governance, finance, and school law later in the year.

Look for these announcements later this winter and through the spring or call your Field Services director at 217/528-9688 or 630/629-3776 or visit <http://www.iasb.com>

for dates and locations.

Many IASB spring division dinner meetings also will feature presentations on legislative issues by IASB governmental relations staff. The discussion will cover the latest information from the Capitol on school funding, key education initiatives, and other hot legislative issues.

Reservations can be made by mail, fax or online. Although some of the times and locations have yet to be determined, the first of the division meetings began Feb. 3 in IASB's Three Rivers Division. The schedule is available online at: <https://www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm>.

Board of directors meets at Joint Annual Conference, sets committees

At its organizational meeting after the Joint Annual Conference, held on Sunday, Nov. 23, the IASB Board of Directors assigned committees for the coming year:

- Elected members to the Executive Committee: Roger Edgecombe, Roger Pfister, Karen Fisher and Joanne Osmond in addition to President Mark C. Metzger, Vice Presi-

dent Joseph Alesandrini, Past President Marie Slater and Treasurer Carolyn Brooks;

- Appointed to the Nominating Committee: Marie Slater – chair, Ben Andersen, Dale Hansen, Sue McCance and Roger Pfister – members. Jackie Mickley and Dave Barton – alternates;
- Appointed to the 2009 NSBA dele-

gates/alternates: Joseph Alesandrini, Carolyn Brooks, Marie Slater and Tariq Butt – delegates; Barbara Somogyi, Michelle Skinlo and Carol Farnum – alternates;

- Appointed Joanne Zendol and John Metzger to co-chair the Joint Annual Conference Committee in 2009;
- Appointed Mark Harms as IASB Liaison to the IHSA.

Joint Annual Conference photo gallery posted, copies available

IASB's conference photographer has posted hundreds of photos taken at the 2008 Joint Annual Conference.

Over 600 photos – from Friday morning's pre-conference workshops to the final general session on Sunday – are now posted on a secured third party website. There is no fee for this member service; however, visitors will need a password to log into the site.

The photos are available at <http://momentshare.com/levyphoto/>. Viewers will just need to enter an e-mail address, plus the event code (iasb08) and password (chicago) in order to access the gallery. These words are case-sensitive.

The gallery images appear in a low-resolution, "thumbnail" format. Visitors can click on any photo to see a larger image, or use the slide show button that automatically scrolls through the entire gallery. It is also possible to choose to view each image in color, black and white or sepia tone.

Those who wish also are able to order their own prints. These will be high-resolution quality photographs

and each is available in any size, from 3 by 5s to 11 by 14 inches. Prices range from \$1.25 to \$14.25.

CD duplicates are \$5 per image. Both a high and a low resolution image are included. The cost of the CD itself is \$5. All rights are included in the image usage.

Shipping and handling are extra. Rates will vary according to where it's being shipped to, depending on whether it's from photographer's office or from the secured third party website, Momentshare.

Shipping and handling from Levy Photography offices is \$8; postage is \$5/priority mail. MomentShare will indicate this S&H cost on the site's "shopping cart" feature.

The 2008 Joint Annual Conference was held Nov. 21-23 in Chicago. Representatives from 773 Illinois public school districts attended this latest Conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators and the Illinois Association of School Business Officials. More about this year's event can be found at: <https://www.iasb.com/jac08/>.

IASB seeks new panel ideas for 2009 Joint Annual Conference presentations

The Illinois Association of School Boards is now seeking proposals for "Share the Success" panel sessions at the 2009 Joint Annual Conference. School districts and other organizations are invited to submit specific proposals for these 90-minute panel presentations — presented by the board members, administrators and other school or community members who were involved in the particular programs showcased — based on actual school system experiences.

Presenters give insight and practical information on how to solve common problems. They share discoveries

and innovations from programs succeeding in their school districts. They also provide tips on how school boards can achieve such successes in their own school districts.

IASB seeks panel suggestions in any category.

The 2009 Joint Annual Conference is set for Nov. 20-22 in Chicago. Proposals for Share the Success panels had to be received in the IASB Springfield office no later than Feb. 13.

For key information including selection criteria for proposals, visit: <http://www.iasb.com/jac08/CallforProposals.pdf>.

NEWS FROM IASB

IASB job fair scheduled for March 7 in Chicago

The 14th annual IASB Job Fair for Teachers, Administrators and Education Majors will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 7, at Shannon Center, Saint Xavier University, Chicago. The aim is to aid districts in hiring qualified teachers and administrators.

The deadline for school district recruiters to register is Feb. 20. Application forms were recently mailed.

Contact Loretta Cotten at: lcotten@iasb.com or call 630/629-3776, ext. 1237. Space is limited; advance registration and a fee are required.

Journal highlights teacher shortage areas and obstacles

School districts need to overcome at least nine obstacles if they are to fill teacher shortage areas in Illinois, according to the authors of the cover story, "Coming up short finding good teachers," in the January/February 2009 issue of *The Illinois School Board Journal*.

Find this as well as articles on strategic planning, National Board Certification and how the words of Abraham Lincoln can help define leadership for school board members in your mailed copy of *The Journal* or on-line at [IASB.com](http://www.iasb.com).

NOTICE OF ERROR: School maintenance book

Gary Lonquist, business manager of **Mundelein High School District 120**, is incorrectly identified in the new Fourth Edition of *Good School Maintenance*, published by the Illinois Association of School Boards. Mr. Lonquist provided a great deal of assistance with the chapter on the design and maintenance of HVAC systems. The IASB Publications Department sincerely regrets the error and apologizes both to Mr. Lonquist and to users of the manual.

Developments clarify contract bidding requirements



Melinda Selbee is IASB's general counsel

DEVELOPMENTS IN SCHOOL LAW

Competitive bidding requirements significantly advance contract accountability and transparency. Sometimes, however, competitive bidding can impede business efficiency and productivity. Recognizing this, the legislature set a bidding threshold below which districts do not need to bid their purchases and contracts. The legislature also allowed 15 specific exceptions to the bidding requirement. Two developments from 2008 concerning competitive bidding requirements are very favorable for school districts – one concerns a bidding exception and one concerns the bidding threshold.

A taxpayer lawsuit argued that a school district failed to competitively bid its energy contract with the Illinois Energy Consortium (IEC). The taxpayer sought to prevent the district from contracting with IEC for electricity and natural gas and to have the district's existing IEC contract declared void. The district defended by arguing that *The School Code* exempted utility service contracts from mandatory bidding.

The relevant statutory provision, at the time of the lawsuit, granted school boards the power:

To award all contracts for purchase of supplies, materials or work or contracts with public carriers for transportation of pupils involving an expenditure in excess of \$10,000 to the lowest responsible bidder, considering the conformity with specifications, terms of delivery, quality and serviceability, after due advertisement, except the following: ...contracts for goods or services which are economically procurable from only one source,

such as for the purchase of magazines, books, periodicals, pamphlets and reports, and for utility services such as water, light, heat, telephone or telegraph; (105 ILCS 5/10-20.21(a)(xiii))

Several appellate decisions have interpreted the bidding mandate, including the meaning of *lowest responsible bidder* and various bidding exceptions. This case was the first to examine the particular exemption in question. Using statutory construction rules, the Court found that exemption xiii encompasses both goods available from a single source and utility services. Tarsitano v. Board of Ed. of Twp. High Sch. Dist. 211, 896 N.E.2d 359 (Ill.App.1st, 2008).

This case was watched closely because a large number of Illinois school districts do not bid utility service contracts. The holding affirms many school districts' current practices and allows them to continue entering into contracts for utility services, such as "water, light, heat, telephone or telegraph," without engaging in *The School Code's* competitive bidding process.

Another welcome recent development was the legislature's action to raise the bidding threshold. The new bidding threshold was raised from \$10,000 to \$25,000. Thus, absent an applicable bidding exemption, a board must "award all contracts for purchase of supplies, materials or work or contracts with public carriers for transportation of pupils involving an expenditure in excess of \$25,000 or a lower amount as required by board policy to the lowest responsible bidder" (105 ILCS 5/10-20.21, amended by P.A. 95-990).

This legislation also raised the bidding threshold from \$20,000 to \$50,000 in a bidding exemption, that is, "contracts for repair, maintenance,

remodeling, renovation, or construction, or a single project involving an expenditure not to exceed \$50,000 and not involving a change or increase in the size, type, or extent of an existing facility."

Other contract accountability and transparency laws

Besides the bidding mandate, there are other important contract accountability and transparency requirements. The voting protocol for a motion to approve a contract involving the expenditure of money requires that "the yeas and nays shall be taken and entered on the records of the proceedings." (105 ILCS 5/10-7) Plus, the motion itself must contain "a public recital of the nature of the matter being considered and other information that will inform the public of the business being considered." (5 ILCS 120/2)

The Annual Statement of Financial Affairs shows each individual and entity that received a gross payment in excess of \$2,500. (105 ILCS 5/10-17) While there is no requirement to post it on the district's website, each district must submit its statement of affairs to the Illinois State Board of Education for posting on ISBE's website.

New legislation requires all contracts in excess of \$25,000 and any contracts with an exclusive bargaining representative to be listed on the district website, if the district has one. (105 ILCS 5/10-20.40, as added by P.A. 95-707).

In addition to the laws advancing accountability and transparency, many statutes contain requirements for specific types of purchases and contracts. School officials should consult their board policies on purchases and contracts and contact their board's attorney for advice concerning specific purchases or contracts.

Publication highlights significant school legislation

New laws cover wide range of issues, topics

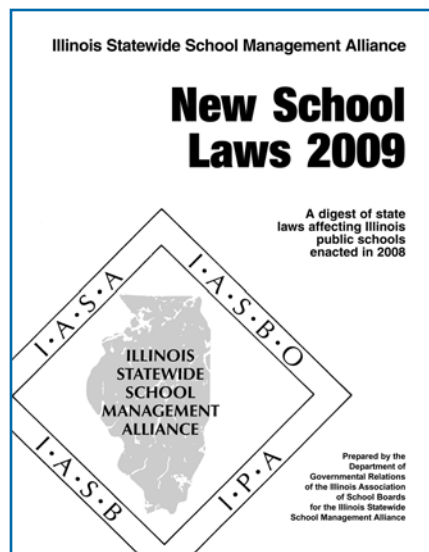
State lawmakers have not adopted a major school construction funding bill for many years, as 2008 again saw all such legislation languish. But the state legislature did adopt one bill related to public construction bonding, and it was among the new legislation recently signed into law by the governor.

The most significant new laws signed, according to the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance, are as follows:

- **SB 1890 (Haine, D-Alton)**, regarding the Public Construction Bond Act, requires surety bonds on public construction projects costing over \$50,000 (now, over \$5,000). During the 15 working days after receiving a default notice, it permits the surety to advise the state or political subdivision that it needs more time to investigate and select a course of action. The law also permits the state or political subdivision to continue the work until the completing contractor is prepared to commence performance if (i) the surety needs the additional time to investigate and select a course of action or the surety elects to use a completing contractor that is not prepared to commence performance within 15 working days after receipt of the default notice and (ii) the state or political subdivision determines that it is in the best interest of the state to maintain work progress.

The bill is now Public Act 95-1011, effective Dec. 15, 2008. For the full text, go to: <http://www.ilga.gov/>

- **SB 2688 (Kotowski, D-Park Ridge)** requires school districts to conduct a law enforcement drill each year to prepare students and school personnel for evacuations for incidents of shootings, bomb threats, etc. The drill must be conducted according to the school district's current emer-



gency and crisis response plans (already required by law) and allows schools to perform the law enforcement drills on days and times when students are not present in the school building. These latter provisions were added by an Alliance amendment so that no new requirements and criteria would force a school district to change its procedures and so school officials can work with law enforcement to perfect the crisis plan without the ensuing trauma of having young students present during the drill.

The bill is now Public Act 95-1015, effective July 1, 2008. For the full text, go to: <http://www.ilga.gov/>

- **SB 2743 (Noland, D-Elgin)** allows school attendance information to flow from school districts to the police unimpeded by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. It allows a school district to disclose education records relating to attendance to juvenile authorities if the school board determines the disclosure will enhance the juvenile justice system's ability to serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records are released. The juvenile authority must certify in writing that the records will not be disclosed to any other entity without the prior written consent of the student's parent or custodian, except

as provided under state law.

The bill is now Public Act 95-1016, effective July 1, 2009.

IASB has prepared a detailed list of new laws, *New School Laws 2009*, which was scheduled to be mailed on Jan. 23. Compiled by the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance, it summarizes bills adopted during the spring session of the Illinois General Assembly and signed into law by the governor.

The purpose of the publication is to notify school leaders about any newly adopted law or change in existing law that is important to local districts. Laws are indexed by bill number, Public Act number and title. Laws are also separated by subjects, such as boards of education, personnel, regional office of education, school finance, school safety and health, state board of education, students, and taxation.

This extremely useful publication will be mailed to district superintendents, business officials and principals, as well as to each school board's legislative liaison and president. It will also be made available soon on the IASB Web site under the governmental relations tab at <http://www.iasb.com/govrel/>.

Board members allowed tax deduction on expenses

School board members are allowed a deduction on their federal income tax returns for non-reimbursed expenses arising out of board service. The cost of driving to and from board meetings is one such deduction.

Board members must itemize deductions and file Form 1040 to qualify. For further information contact the IRS or see IRS Publication 526, "Charitable Contributions," containing guidelines pertinent to board member deductions. Free copies of that publication are available from the IRS and may be obtained via fax or mail by calling 1-800/829-3676.

NSBA conference programming aims to support school leadership

Toni Morrison, one of the world's most prominent authors and winner of both the Nobel Prize in Literature and the Pulitzer Prize, will be the speaker April 5 at the National School Boards Association's 2009 Annual Conference in San Diego. More than 10,000 school board members are scheduled to attend, including several hundred Illinois district leaders and IASB staff and presenters.

Organizers say the event is the largest gathering of public school leaders in the nation and showcases world and national officials who offer encouragement and insights to school leaders. In fact, more than 300 educational sessions are planned for the April 4-8 event.

Topic tracks include accountability, alignment, climate, collaboration, community engagement, continuous improvement, school law, standards and assessment, and technology. Board member boot camps, pre-conference workshops, exhibits, job fair, tours, entertainment, receptions, and more have been scheduled.

Other keynoters include renowned actress Julie Andrews, and Greg Mortenson, co-founder of the non-profit Central Asia Institute, and new U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan.



In addition to these speakers, the conference will also feature education researcher Douglas Reeves, founder of The Leadership and Learning Center, who will discuss how policymakers and leaders can address the dual challenges of change and stability.

The 69th annual conference will also feature programming for superintendents, urban school districts, state association directors, attorneys, and the annual delegate assembly.

For more information visit the online registration at https://register.nsba.org/secure/register/annual/2009/acreg_welcome.cfm. Housing registration for the conference has been open since mid October.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 3 – Three Rivers Division Meeting, Renaissance Center, Joliet, 6 p.m.

February 7 – South Cook Legislative Breakfast, Hoover-Schrum District 157, 8:30 a.m. - noon

February 11 – Starved Rock Division-Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Workshop, Ottawa High School, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

February 18 – North Cook Winter Dinner Meeting, Rosemont, 6 p.m.

February 24 – DuPage Winter Dinner Meeting, Lombard, 6 p.m.

February 24 – Shawnee Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Harrisburg CUSD 3, 6 p.m.

February 26 – Illini Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Rantoul City SD 137, 6 p.m.

February 26 – Two Rivers Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Jacksonville District 117, 6 p.m.

February 27-28 – IASB Leadership Conference, Hyatt Regency, Chicago

February 28 – IASB Board of Directors' Meeting, Hyatt Regency, Chicago

March 3 – Wabash Valley Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Effingham CUSD 40, 6 p.m.

March 3 – Kaskaskia Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Nokomis CUSD 22, 6 p.m.



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