

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD *Newsbulletin*

January 2010 / Issue No. 693



Show us the money. The marquee outside the high school in LeRoy CUSD 2 says it all. Like others all over Illinois, the district is owed hundreds of thousands of dollars by the state.

February ballots to include several key finance referenda

At least nine school districts have placed school finance referendum questions on the Feb. 2 primary election ballot, including six tax increase propositions and three building bond issues.

Placing tax increase proposals before voters are: **Lemont-Bromberek Combined School District 113A**; **Marengo-Union Elementary CSD 165**; **Mokena School District No. 159**; **Pontiac Community Consolidated School District No. 429**; **Ridgeview Communi-**

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State submits federal 'race to top' application on time

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) submitted an application to the federal government for "Race to the Top" grant funds on Jan 19, but insiders say most school boards may not qualify or get any significant amount of funding at all. The funds, which amount to more than \$4 billion to be distributed across the nation, will flow through the federal Department of Education (DOE). If Illinois is chosen to receive

a grant, and most states will not, the state could receive between \$200 and \$400 million.

In an effort to strengthen the state's "Race to the Top" application status, the ISBE was able to push through supporting legislation in mid-January.

The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance organizations' executive directors were involved in dozens of hours of discussions and negotiations with the governor's office, the

ISBE, and other education stakeholders over the past several months regarding the proposals. Countless improvements were adopted in **SB 315** (PA 96-861) to the "Performance Evaluation Reform Act" proposal, based on Alliance recommendations, which benefit local school districts. It requires the use of data and indicators of student growth in rating performance.

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Federal funding application completed one month early

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) completed the state's Phase II State Fiscal Stabilization Fund application in December, nearly a month before the deadline.

"We have been working to move quickly on completing this application because the state sorely needs the additional cash to continue paying bills," explained State Superintendent Christopher Koch.

Meanwhile, according to Koch, as of mid-December the state had been able to make state aid payments on time. But Koch warned that the Comptroller has a backlog of state bills totaling \$4.2 billion, with unpaid vouchers dating back to Aug. 11, 2009. That \$4.2 billion total includes 18,000 vouchers from the ISBE totaling \$757 million. A breakout of the larger ISBE vouchers:

- Mandated Categoricals — \$523 million
- Early Childhood Block Grant — \$80 million
- Textbooks — \$30 million
- Career Tech Education — \$19 million

Technology competitive grants offered for laptops

The State Board has released an RFP for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) Enhancing Education Through Technology (EETT) Competitive Grant: Illinois School Reform Through Technology Initiative (IL-SRTT). The purpose of the federal grant is to provide an unprecedented one-time opportunity for eligible applicants to acquire low-cost laptop/ultra-portable notebook computers to create fully integrated, state-of-the-art learning environments.

The RFP is available at the following site: <http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/elearning/default.htm>.

Division meetings to cover the waterfront of hot issues and legislation this spring

The IASB spring division dinner meetings 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.

Examples of hot topics on the agenda, by IASB division, are:

- Starved Rock Division will feature a legislative evening
- North Cook is offering a Superintendents' Roundtable: "Local Leaders, World Class Insights," featuring four superintendents
- DuPage will have six breakout panels on the theme "21st Century Green Districts," involving "green" topics such as architecture, LEED certification, energy education, green technology and green curriculum
- Kishwaukee, Lake, Northwest and Blackhawk divisions will all have presentations on Compliance Basics for the New FOIA, presented by experienced school attorneys
- Central Illinois Valley's keynote speaker will be Dr. Marty Hickman, IHSA
- Corn Belt will offer two breakout sessions, including one featuring an extensive talk and tour of the new **Olympia CUSD 16**, Stanford, elementary school building (from referendum, specifications, and bid, to construction)
- Southwestern will include three breakout panels: The Board's Role in Property Tax Appeals, presented by Alan Mullins; A School Business Officials Perspective on Current Issues, presented by Cal Jackson; and Project Lead the Way, presented by **Highland CUSD 5** Superintendent Michael Sutton and staff
- Two Rivers will also offer three breakout panels, including one on the revised Freedom of Information Act
- Kaskaskia, and Abe Lincoln will

offer three breakout panels, as well, on topics to be finalized

Although some of the specifics have yet to be determined, the first of the division meetings is set for Feb. 23 in the Shawnee Division. The full list of meetings is available online at: <https://www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm>.

Attendance at division meetings earns five credits in IASB's Master Board Member program. Reservations can be made by mail, fax or online.

The first four spring division meetings are scheduled for late February, including:

Feb. 23, Shawnee Division,

Carterville CUSD 5

Feb. 24, Southwestern, Division,

O'Fallon CCSD 90

Feb. 25, Illini Division,

St. Joseph CCSD 169

Feb. 25, Two Rivers Division,

Triopia CUSD 27, Concord

For more information on these upcoming division meetings — and others planned for the spring — visit IASB at <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/>.

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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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	New 07	New 09	change	Actual '07	'09 Target	Actual '09	20% CHALLENGE MET or EXCEEDED	Honorable Mention
Three Rivers	83	91	8	19 or 22.9%	25 or 27.5%	33 or 36.3%	X	
Abe Lincoln	80	69	-11	20 or 25%	21 or 30%	29 or 42%	X	
Blackhawk	31	36	5	6 or 19.4%	8 or 23.3%	8 or 23.3%	X	
DuPage	63	64	1	24 or 38.1%	29 or 45.7%	29 or 45.3%	X	
Egyptian	59	82	23	2 or 3.4%	3 or 4%	7 or 8.5%	X	
Illini	69	54	-15	12 or 18.8%	12 or 22.6%	13 or 24.1%	X	
Kishwaukee	66	66	0	26 or 39.4%	31 or 47.3%	34 or 51.5%	X	
Northwest	59	53	-6	12 or 20.3%	13 or 24.4%	15 or 28.3%	X	
Shawnee	55	63	8	7 or 12.7%	10 or 15.9%	10 or 15.9%	X	
North Cook	70	71	1	29 or 41.4 %	35 or 49.7%	32 or 45.1%		X
West Cook	62	49	-13	19 or 30.6%	18 or 36.7%	17 or 34.7%		X
Western	53	30	-23	14 or 26.4%	10 or 31.7%	8 or 26.6%		X

Association shares successful numbers from '20% Challenge'

In conjunction with the 2009 school board elections, the IASB challenged itself to increase the number of newly elected board members who received training within the first six months of their board service. At the February 2009 Leadership Conference, IASB's division leadership joined staff in developing strategies to encourage new board member attendance and increase attendance in each division by 20% over 2007 per-

centages.

Over half of IASB's divisions increased the percentage of newly elected board members who received training. The very aggressive 20% Challenge goal was met or exceeded by nine of IASB's 21 divisions with three additional divisions increasing overall attendance percentage:

"We are pleased with the terrific



response we received from division leaders, and the outcome they were able to help us achieve," said Associate Executive Director, Board Development, Angela Peifer. "At the February Leadership conference we will roll out final numbers and have a celebration of the success we have witnessed," Peifer added.

School boards asked to 'share the success' with panel ideas for 2010 Joint Conference

The Illinois Association of School Boards is seeking proposals for "Share the Success" panel sessions at the 2010 Joint Annual Conference, and a new electronic RFP form is available to make it easier and faster to comply by submitting them online. 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 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 districts. They also

provide tips on how boards can achieve such successes.

IASB seeks panel suggestions, to be submitted by filling out forms either online or by mail, in any of these categories: Governance/Leadership, Finance and Funding, Current Issues, Community Relations and Communications, School Law, Facilities/Transportation/Technology, Best Practices, and Governmental Relations.

The 2010 Joint Annual Conference is set for Nov. 19-21 in Chicago. Proposals for Share the Success panels must be received in the IASB Springfield office no later than Feb. 15.

To obtain details, including selection criteria, and the forms necessary (a new electronic RFP form is available), visit: <http://www.iasb.com/jac09/rfp2010.cfm>.

Many handouts offered online from 2009 Joint Annual Conference panels

If you failed to make it to a particularly intriguing panel session at the 2009 Joint Annual Conference in November, it may not be too late to pick up some useful information from it. Handouts from numerous panels presented at the 2009 Conference are now available online.

Panels are listed by date, title and the location of the panel presentation. Board secretary sessions are listed together at the bottom of the page. The posted materials will be available on the IASB Members-Only site until September 2010.

To get your copy of a panel handout, simply visit online at: http://members/conference/jac_handouts.cfm.

RACE *from page 1*

“Some of the changes pushed by the Alliance secured school district management rights, accounted for the longer phase-in of the evaluation criteria, and required the ISBE to have a system of support in place and adequate funding before school districts would have to comply with the bill’s provisions,” explained IASB Associate Executive Director of Governmental Relations, Ben Schwarm.

A late amendment was added to the bill for the Alliance that prohibits principal and superintendent performance evaluations from being disclosed.

The federal DOE will be awarding grants to states that pledge to promulgate and enforce stringent new education reforms intended to improve student achievement. At least half of the “Race to the Top” funding will be directed to a state’s school districts that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU includes a promise that the school district will implement additional education reforms as spelled out in the contract.

The ISBE contacted school districts with specific information about Illinois’ grant application process. The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance distributed information to its members, as well. Superintendents, principals, and school business officials received this information via e-mail in mid-December.

Among the information contained in the Alliance’s guidance was the following advice: “In conclusion, school districts should not dismiss this opportunity without due consideration. A school district should critically analyze both the potential for positive outcomes of participating against the costs Furthermore, due to the unknown financial variables ... the individual school district grant allocation cannot be calculated at this time. However, as the variables are defined, a “price point” should be able to be calculated and communicated to school districts. At that point, the mandatory requirements ... should be closely reviewed in light of the

impact, costs, and capacity of your individual school district to comply....”

School board presidents received the same information through the mail. In the “Race to the Top” program, the federal government requires Illinois to identify the 5% of the state’s lowest performing schools. In Illinois, those will be referred to as “high priority schools.” This list of schools was also made available by the ISBE.

It was suggested that district superintendents consult with their local legal counsel, the board of education and the local teachers’ association before executing the MOU. Official board action was also necessary at an official meeting of the school board, and it was reported by the governor’s office that more than 330 schools had applied and met all these MOU requirements.

School districts also can sign up to participate in Race to the Top for up until 90 days after the state is awarded a grant (if it is awarded one), according to the National School Boards Association (NSBA).

NSBA also advises that some school districts may choose to work with the state to implement parts of the state plan that require statewide or nearly statewide implementation, such as transitioning to the common standards and developing a longitudinal data system. These districts can consider becoming “involved LEAs,” which do not have to enter into a MOU with the state and can sign up by the state at any time and by any method that the state chooses.

However, an “involved LEA” will not be eligible for a share of the 50 percent RTTT grant that the state must distribute to “participating LEAs” under the Title I Part A formula, NSBA notes. States can choose to provide funding to “involved LEAs” from the remaining 50 percent of RTTT funds or from other sources. States have considerable flexibility in allocating the remaining 50 percent, which is available for state-level activities, disbursements to LEAs, and other purposes as the state may propose in its plan (therefore, it is critical to review

the state plan before signing on to become a “participating LEA”). The bottom line is that a state does not have to provide RTTT funds, benefits or supports to non-participating LEAs.

States will have two opportunities to apply for RTTT funds. Phase 1 applications were due on January 19, 2010, and those awards will be made in April of 2010. But, if Illinois is not awarded a grant based on the Phase 1 applications, Phase 2 applications are due on June 1, 2010 and awards will be made by September of 2010.

Legislature supports RTTT effort

The first piece of ISBE legislation, the “Performance Evaluation Reform Act of 2010,” was added by amendment to **SB 315**. The bill was approved by the legislature on Jan. 13.

The bill states that “effective teachers and school leaders are a critical factor contributing to student achievement” and that “many existing district performance evaluation systems fail to adequately distinguish between effective and ineffective teachers and principals.” Specifically, SB 315:

- allows for other qualified individuals besides administrators to perform teacher evaluations, including peer evaluations by other teachers and evaluations by department chairs
- requires evaluators to receive training on the evaluation of certified personnel prior to undertaking any evaluation and at least once during each certificate renewal cycle
- requires that any evaluator undertaking an evaluation after Sep. 1, 2012 to first successfully complete a pre-qualification program provided or approved by the ISBE
- requires that school districts, in good faith cooperation with its teachers/collective bargaining representative, incorporate the use of data and indicators on student growth as a significant factor in rating performance and teacher evaluation plans. This requirement is phased in as follows:

RACE *from page 1*

- at least 300 schools in the Chicago Public School system by Sep. 1, 2012 and the remaining Chicago schools by Sep. 1, 2013
- for all schools that receive a “Race to the Top” grant (those that submitted the Memorandum of Understanding) or that receive a federal School Improvement Grant, by the date specified in the MOU (teachers and principals)
- for the lowest performing 20% of school districts, by Sep. 1, 2015
- for all other school districts by Sep. 1, 2016
- requires that a joint committee of equal representation of district personnel and teachers meet to agree on the incorporation of the use of data and student growth in teacher evaluation plans. If no agreement is reached within 180 days, the district shall implement the model evaluation plan that contains criteria set in the bill and in forthcoming ISBE rules and regulations
- requires that, by Sep. 1, 2012, all school districts shall evaluate all non-tenured teachers at least annually and evaluate tenured teachers at least once every two years (except that tenured teachers who have been rated as “needs improvement” or “unsatisfactory” must be evaluated at least once in the year following the receipt of such rating)
- requires that, after Sep. 1, 2012, all tenured teachers be rated as “excellent,” “proficient,” “needs improvement,” or “unsatisfactory”
- requires that, within 30 days after the completion of a tenured teacher evaluation rating of “needs improvement,” a professional development plan must be developed addressing the areas which need improvement
- requires that principal evaluation plans for principals on a single-year contract must take place by March 1 (instead of Feb. 1)
- requires that, by Sep. 1, 2012, principal evaluation ratings must be “excellent,” “proficient,” “needs improvement,” or “unsatisfactory”
- requires that, after Sep. 1, 2012, the use of data and student growth must be used as a significant factor in rating a principal
- requires the ISBE to develop and implement a data collection and evaluation assessment and support system by Sep. 30, 2011 – if Illinois receives a “Race to the Top” grant; Sep. 1, 2012 if Illinois does not receive the grant
- requires districts to send ISBE teacher and principal performance evaluation data and information
- states that if the ISBE does not have the assessment and support systems in place in a timely manner, and if sustainable federal or state funding is not provided, all implementation dates are postponed
- prohibits districts from seeking to waive or modify requirements on use of student performance data as part of teacher or principal evaluation

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FEB. ELECTION *from page 1*

ty Unit School District No. 19, Colfax; and **Sunnybrook School District 171**, Lansing. All appear to be education fund increases, although details are not yet available in some cases.

The three known building bond issues on the ballot in February are: **Rockdale School District No. 84**; **Ottawa Elementary School District 141**; and **Union School District 81**, Joliet.

Superintendent Craig Doster, of Ottawa Elementary District 141, says his district wants to construct a new school instead of rebuilding flood-ravaged Central School or converting the former Wal-Mart building, where school is now being held, from a temporary learning building to a permanent educational facility.

The District 141 school board recently purchased land in South Ottawa, he explained, and the community now has an opportunity to provide a brand new facility to local

students for “either zero dollars or, at most, pennies on the dollar.”

Doster said that if the referendum passes, the school district will issue bonds for \$18.5 million to begin the project. With expected insurance money up to more than \$13 million from the Illinois Educational Management Agency and the Federal Emergency Management Agency combined with an Illinois State Board of Education grant of up to \$14 million, the district could provide students with a new, safe, energy-efficient school out of the flood plain, he said.

In addition to the school district tax and bond referendum questions on the primary election ballot, countywide sales tax plans are being considered in two jurisdictions, namely Coles County, and Lawrence County.

See the March *Newsbulletin* for coverage of February referendum results.

Board members allowed income tax deduction

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

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

Revised Freedom of Information Act carries higher costs



Melinda Selbee is IASB's general counsel

Major changes to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) took effect on January 1, 2010. With some important exceptions, the transparency requirements are not new. Significantly increased, however, are workload and compliance costs. The deadlines are shortened, necessitating a strategy to locate records quickly. Having to comply with requests for commercial purposes will, at a minimum, amplify work for office staff. Almost every denial of a request will require the advice of the board's attorney.

The task of highlighting the major changes to FOIA begins with its new, stronger statements of public policy supporting openness. The revised FOIA makes it a "fundamental obligation of government to operate openly and provide public records as expediently and efficiently as possible." All district records are presumed to be open to the public. Complying with FOIA is a primary duty of public bodies, "fiscal obligations notwithstanding." The Attorney General's office or a court will use these statements to interpret FOIA whenever a denial is challenged.

Every district must now have a FOIA officer(s) to receive and respond to FOIA requests. The FOIA officer must also develop a list of records that the district will "immediately disclose upon request." This individual must complete training through the Attorney General's office.

The revised FOIA gives an important role concerning FOIA to the Public Access Counselor in the Attorney General's office. The Public Access Counselor is responsible for, among other things, responding to informal

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inquiries, mediating disputes, issuing advisory and binding opinions, and providing electronic training to all FOIA officers.

The timelines for responding to FOIA requests are shortened. A response must be made in five business days (exclusive of a commercial request). An additional five business days are permitted in limited situations, e.g., the requested records are stored elsewhere or further review is needed to determine whether the records are exempt from disclosure. A response to a commercial request must be made in 21 business days. An untimely response constitutes a denial.

The exemptions from disclosure are rewritten. The exemption for personnel file information was deleted; thus, public bodies must identify other exemption(s) to deny personnel information. The exemptions include, but are not limited to:

1. Private information, meaning a "unique identifier," e.g., Social Security or personal phone number.
2. Personal information, if its disclosure would constitute a "clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy." However, information that bears upon the public duties of public officials is not considered an invasion of personal privacy.
3. Preliminary drafts, recommendations, notes, etc., in which opinions are expressed. However, a record is not exempt if it is publicly cited and identified by the head of the public body.
4. Bids until an award is made, test questions and scoring keys, closed meeting minutes, and attorney-client communications.
5. Records relating to the adjudication of employee grievances or disciplinary cases. However this exemption does not extend to the

final outcome of cases in which discipline is imposed.

6. Information that is prohibited from disclosure by federal or state law, specifically including the Personnel Records Review Act and the Ill. School Student Records Act. The School Code prohibits the disclosure of the performance evaluations of teachers, principals and superintendents. 105ILCS 5/24-A-7, added by PA 96-861

Exemptions numbered 2 and 3 above require pre-approval by the Attorney General's Public Access Counselor.

A district may still deny a request that is unduly burdensome. Repeated requests from the same person for the same records that are unchanged or identical to records previously provided or properly denied are deemed unduly burdensome. Using fiscal concerns may be difficult because FOIA states that providing records is a primary duty of public bodies, fiscal obligations notwithstanding.

No fee may be charged for the first 50 pages of black and white, letter or legal-sized copies. This does not apply to commercial requests. Letter or legal-sized copies cannot exceed 15 cents per page. Electronic versions must be provided, if requested.

Any person may request review by the Attorney General's Public Access Counselor. The Public Access Counselor may grant relief through binding or advisory opinions, mediation, or other means. Any person may bring a civil action alleging that a public body violated FOIA. Possible remedies include an order to produce public records improperly withheld, mandatory attorney fees to a prevailing requestor, and penalties from \$2,500 to \$5,000 for each occurrence of willful and intentional failure to comply or acting in bad faith.

Bill introduced to end unfunded school mandates

Recently introduced bills include two sweeping pieces of legislation sponsored by Rep. Roger L. Eddy (R-Hutsonville), a superintendent in Hutsonville CUSD 1, including one that would end unfunded school mandates. The other bill would complete a school leadership initiative to provide an alternative to having the state enter into a national Military Compact.



Rep. Roger Eddy

ed mandates on school districts.

HB 4674 (Eddy) is an Alliance initiative that is a viable alternative to the state entering into a national military compact. The bill addresses issues faced by parents who serve in the military who transfer into new states and school districts, but allows any problems to be solved by state law and local districts instead of granting that authority to a federal panel.

A push was made last year to pass a bill containing provisions for Illinois to join the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. A military compact amendment was added to SB 277 in the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee in October, but no vote was taken on the bill. Opponents said that if Illinois joined the compact, all decisions about students of parents who are in the military who transfer into a school district would be determined by this commission, not the school district or the state. Decisions about student placement in classes, graduation requirements, immunizations, participation in sports or other extracurricular activities, would not be made by the local district or even state law – but would be solely deter-

mined by the interstate commission.

The Alliance and other education groups strongly opposed the latter bill based, not on the concept behind the bill, but by the bill's drafting that usurps local district and state authority to make decisions. The Alliance agreed that efforts should be made by school districts to facilitate the educational experience of all students who transfer into the area. The Alliance offered an alternative amendment which would have addressed the concerns brought forth by military personnel, but by changing current state law instead of by joining the military compact. The Alliance amendment was not considered by the committee.

Opposition to the military compact bill was led by Alliance lobbyist Susan Hilton, IASB's Assistant Director of Governmental Relations, and Sam McGowen, Superintendent of Mascoutah SD 19. They reached out to supporters of the bill in search of a compromise, drafted an alternative amendment, and ultimately testified against the bill in committee.

The military compact initiative will likely re-emerge in the spring session.

All new legislation is available at: <http://www.ilga.gov/>.

Significant new laws impacting schools summarized in booklet from IASB

IASB has prepared a detailed list of new laws impacting schools and school children that are now taking effect with the start of the new year. Titled *New School Laws 2010*, it was scheduled to be mailed on Feb. 1. 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.

One measure listed in the publication, for example, makes it illegal to use a cell phone in a school or construction zone without a hands-free device. Fines can range from \$75 to \$150, though judges can increase them. The bill, HB 72 (D-Amico, D-Chicago), says drivers may only use their cell phone if they are getting directions through a global positioning system or navigation system in the phone, or if the device is physically or electronically integrated into

the vehicle.

A driver may only send a text message if he or she is pulled over to the side of the road or to report an emergency. Penalties will be assessed to those who fail to cooperate, such as a fine, or such drivers may even have their licenses taken away if they are repeat offenders. The bill took effect on Jan. 1.

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/newlaws10.cfm>.

Illinois school board members can gain much at NSBA

Four years after an interim stop in Chicago, the National School Boards Association's Annual Conference returns to Illinois on April 10-12. The return of the nation's premiere school management conference to the Land of Lincoln should be a major draw for Illinois and Midwestern school board members and superintendents.

The ideas and strategies available at NSBA's numerous clinic sessions, workshops, roundtables, speakers, and exhibits will be designed so that they can be implemented back home in your own district.

This year's keynoters include PBS show host Charlie Rose, jazz musician and arts education advocate Wynton Marsalis, and Apple Computer co-founder and education advocate Steve Wozniak.

Two significant changes have been made to the conference to facilitate the needs of attendees. One-day registrations will be offered for those who can't be away for more than a day. And the conference has been shortened by a day, making it easier for more school leaders to attend the entire event.

Full registration for national affil-



iate districts is \$720 and \$895 per person for all others.

Housing opened in October and requires a conference registration confirmation number ID to make your housing reservations. All reservations must be handled through NSBA Housing. Participating hotels will not honor direct reservations. Reservations should be made prior to March 12; after that date, neither NSBA nor NSBA Housing guarantees availability of rooms at designated conference hotels at the NSBA conference rate. Single room rates at the 21 designated hotels start at \$142.

This year's conference, which will be held in the McCormick Place West convention center, will offer an array of learning opportunities, including:

- Deeper look sessions
- Early bird workshops

- Educational focused paths
- Education spotlight sessions
- Key Work program sessions
- Special sessions
- Specialized programming; and
- Technology sessions

The 2010 NSBA Exposition has expanded the number of exclusive exhibit hall hours, to allow visitors more time to see the 300 companies that will display and demonstrate their products and services. And returning this year will be the popular NSBA Marketplace and the Health and Wellness Pavilion.

The conference also offers an executive job fair and delegate assembly, where member districts will vote on key legislative proposals for the coming year.

Illinois school board members should also mark Friday, April 9, East Tower Lobby, Hyatt Regency Chicago; that's when the Illinois Association of School Boards will host a reception from 6 to 8 p.m. for IASB guests at the conference.

For more information or to register, visit the online registration at https://secure.nsba.org/register/annual/2010/acreg_welcome.cfm.

It's not too late to get professional photos of November Joint Annual Conference

IASB has finished posting hundreds of photos taken at the Joint Annual Conference.

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

The web site address and password are posted at a secure third-party site <http://momentshare.com/levyphoto/>. They were posted as soon as the photos were processed.

Images appear in a low-resolu-

tion, "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 may order their own prints in any size, from wallets to 11 by 14 inches.

Questions concerning this year's conference photos can be directed to Robert Levy Photography, 773/625-1741, or by emailing r-levy@sbc-global.net. Questions about photo orders can be emailed to Support@MomentShare.com.

IASA's annual confab set for April 14-16

The IASA Conference scheduled for April 14-16 draws more than 650 school administrators to Springfield each year.

This year's event to be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Springfield presents an excellent opportunity, event organizers say, to establish new contacts, network with colleagues, and meet the IASA staff and board of directors. General sessions and breakout panels will provide up-to-date information on topics that are relevant to school administrators.

For more information about the IASA Annual Conference contact the IASA at: 217/753-2213.

Association's directors tab treasurer, executive committee members for 2010 leadership posts

IASB's Board of Directors elected a new treasurer for the Association and chose Executive Committee members for 2010 at its Nov. 22, 2009 meeting in Chicago.

Four current directors of IASB were elected to serve on the Association's 2010 Executive Committee: Roger Edgecombe, **Warrensburg-Latham CUSD 11**; Karen Fisher, **Ottawa THSD 140**; Roger Pfister, **Carbondale ESD 95**; and Dale Hansen, **Grant Park CUSD 6**.

Also serving on the Executive Committee are President Joseph Alessandrini, **Pekin CHSD 303**; Vice President Carolyn Brooks, **West Richland CUSD 2**, Noble; Past President Mark C. Metzger, **Indian Prairie CUSD 204**, Naperville; and Treasurer Dane Tippett, **Triad CUSD 2**, Troy. The committee will next meet on Jan. 22 in Springfield.

Dane Tippett was elected treasurer and will serve a two-year term

for the 2010 and 2011 calendar years. Tippett is an officer of the Southwestern Division of IASB, and he has served since 1995 as board member of the **Triad CUSD 2** Board of Education, Troy.

The IASB Board of Directors also had met on Nov. 19, just prior to the Joint Annual Conference. The Board's actions at that meeting included the following:

- Reviewed the Association's Board-Book program
- Received an Annual Conference Committee report and other IASB committee reports, as well as a staffing update and a brief legislative update
- Recognized retiring director Barbara Somogyi

The next meeting of the IASB Board of Directors will be held in conjunction with IASB's 2010 Leadership Conference on Feb. 20 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago.

Illinois school board representatives join national lobbying push at yearly FRN event

This year's National School Boards Association's Federal Relations Network (FRN) lobbying effort by school board leaders, known as the 37th Annual FRN Conference, was held in Washington, D.C., Jan. 31 - Feb. 2.

Conference participants joined with colleagues from across the nation to obtain congressional support for developing practical solutions to school concerns, and strengthening public education for all students.

Last year more than 900 school board members, superintendents and state association staff, representing 48 states, including Illinois, visited their elected representatives in Washington as part of the FRN Conference.

Key aims for FRN this year included:

- Reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA/NCLB), and enlisting Congress to commit to a strong agenda
- Ensuring adequate funding for education programs, including full funding for mandates such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Title I
- Promoting local governance and decision-making as keys to effective public education and student achievement in the 21st century
- Advancing forward-looking initiatives in pre-k education, teacher effectiveness, and innovation

The FRN conference annually involves local school board members. For more information about the 2010 FRN lobbying event, visit: <http://www.nsba.org/FRN2010>.

NEWS FROM IASB

Are our schools healthier? March/April Journal asks

The progress that schools and students are making to combat childhood obesity will be the focus of the March/April 2010 issue of *The Illinois School Board Journal*.

The Journal first looked at the childhood obesity issue in March/April 2004 and followed up in 2007, a year after schools were required to adopt local school wellness policies. Now that another three years have passed, are those policies making a difference? Find out in early March!

Meanwhile, don't miss the January/February *Journal*, the first to feature the magazine's redesign, which creatively takes advantage of its full-color capabilities. Readers say the fresh new look makes every article "pop off the page."

None of the usual features have been lost, though, such as "Ask the Staff," "Tale End" and Gus' "In the boiler room." Likewise, *The Journal's* high-quality articles and reliable information are provided as professionally as ever.

Annual Report of Services published by Association

Each year IASB publishes an Annual Report of Services for Fiscal Year 2009 that reviews activities of the previous fiscal year, outlines services available to member districts, and identifies staff members who deliver various services. The latest Annual Report was mailed out in January.

This Annual Report is filled with data to show the level of member activities and participation in IASB, plus the services provided by the Association, and the cost of doing business for the fiscal year just past. And it shows how changes impacted public schools and what lies ahead.

Congress passes budget minus Title I cuts for schools

A long-delayed fiscal year 2010 federal spending bill providing level funding for key education programs, which had been approved previously by the House of Representatives and by the Senate Appropriations Committee, was finally passed on December 13. The bill has been sent to President Obama for his signature.

A key issue regarding the president's Fiscal Year 2010 education budget request was that it would have cut Title I grants to districts by \$1.5 billion and, instead, steered \$1 billion to Title I School Improvement Grants. Such grants are aimed at helping districts turn around schools struggling to meet the goals of the No Child Left Behind Act, the 2002 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The Senate had tried to include a cut to Title I from the regular fiscal year 2009 amount, and steer money to a \$700 million new school construction program.

The compromise bill rejects both the administration's idea and the Senate plan and instead provides \$14.5 billion for Title I grants to school districts to help cover the cost of edu-

cating disadvantaged students, about the same level as in fiscal year 2009. The Title I grant program, however, has already received an additional \$3 billion in fiscal 2010 through the federal stimulus plan.

The compromise budget funds school improvement grants at the same level as fiscal year 2009, \$546 million.

The budget provides \$400 million for the Teacher Incentive Fund, which doles out grants for performance pay programs. That is below the \$487 million the administration wanted, but a big boost over the \$97 million the program received last year.

Those figures don't include up to \$100 billion in education spending in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the stimulus program, which covers fiscal 2009 and 2010.

The bill includes \$256 million for charter schools, a \$40 million boost over last year, and \$250 million for Striving Readers, a secondary school literacy program. Instead of serving only adolescents, it will become a comprehensive program for pre-K through grade 12.

The bill contains \$50 million for

an initiative to boost high school graduation rates through a new program. It holds \$11.5 billion more to fund state grants to help educate students in special education, the same funding level as last year. The economic stimulus package also included an additional \$11.3 billion over two years for that program.

Finally, the measure would include a technical change sought by the Education Department to widen eligibility for the \$650 million Investing in Innovation Fund created under the stimulus program.

Originally, the grants were limited by the economic-stimulus law to those school districts that make adequate yearly progress under NCLB for the previous two consecutive years.

Under the change, school districts that have demonstrated success in raising student achievement could win a grant.

Meanwhile, President Obama's Dec. 9 speech suggesting that new legislation could provide fresh funding for the nation's infrastructure has some education advocates hoping that the package could include funding for school facilities.

Arts education guide may help school leaders improve programs via standards-based ideas

Arts educators say there is terrific help now available for schools wishing to improve arts programs. The help is contained in the new book *Committing to Quality in Education: Arts at the Core, a Guidebook and Planning Tool*, a book that can assist schools, school districts, arts organizations, and parents in developing standards-based, quality arts education programs.

The book, released by The Illinois Creates coalition, a group formed in 2004 by the Illinois Arts Alliance, is specifically designed for Illinois teachers, principals, superintendents, parents and community partners. It contains guidance appropriate for

rural, suburban and urban communities, all while addressing the needs of all school levels.

Specifically, the book offers an explanation of policies, practices and systems that support success in arts education. It contains ideas for effective practice from schools and school districts across the state. It also provides worksheets to help stakeholders set action agendas that work toward implementing a high-quality arts education program.

For more information about using the guidebook – available online at <http://artsalliance.org/docs/QualityInEducation.pdf> – call the Arts Alliance at 312/855-3105.

Schools need to observe Nov. 2 election deadlines

The next statewide consolidated election in 2010 is the general election, set for Nov. 2. Key deadlines pertaining to that election include the following:

August 27, 2010 – Last day for the board of education to adopt a resolution putting public policy questions on the ballot at the Nov. 2, 2010 General Election (10 ILCS 5/28-2)

September 2, 2010 – Last day for board secretary to certify public policy questions to the election authority for referendum (10 ILCS 5/28-2)

For more information about deadlines, download the complete list, including legal citations, at: http://www.iasb.com/pdf/cal_10.pdf

NEWS HEADLINES

Barry (Dec. 17, *Herald-Whig*, Quincy) The Western CUSD 12 School Board voted on Dec. 16 to adopt a tax levy 4 percent higher than last year. The levy totaled \$1,859,624, up \$72,939, but Superintendent Rodger Hannel doubts the district will receive the full increase. Hannel said the largest increases came in the Illinois Municipal Retirement and Social Security funds to meet rising costs, but the tort fund levy dropped by \$50,000. The district's equalized assessed value—a key factor in taxes generated—is estimated to increase to \$43.6 million, up 4 percent over last year.

Chicago (Dec. 17, *Chicago Tribune*) Responding to criticism that its admissions criteria could weaken the magnetism of magnet schools, Chicago's school board approved a tweaked magnet schools admissions formula on Dec. 16 designed to better maintain diversity. Chicago schools chief Ron Huberman said the policy will continue to evolve. "We will have the opportunity to do a gut check and determine if we have achieved socioeconomic and racial diversity," he said. A federal judge forced the district to redraw its formula by ending a 30-year-old decree that mandated racial integration in the district. Under a 2007 Supreme Court ruling, schools can no longer use a student's race as a factor in admissions.

Gurnee (Dec. 18, *The Daily Herald*) Warren Township High School violated federal law by preventing 150 juniors from taking a state achievement exam last spring, according to a final ruling by State Superintendent of Education Christopher Koch. Gurnee-based District 121 violated the law by using a dual system to exclude some juniors from the Prairie State Achievement Exam in April, State Superintendent of Education Christopher Koch ruled. In the determination issued Dec. 9, Koch

agreed with a recommendation that Warren should not be stripped of federal funding because of the incident. He added the state will monitor how District 121 uses new student promotion and testing policies approved in the wake of the controversy.

McHenry County (Jan. 4, *Northwest Herald*) The 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act awarded about \$18.46 million in federal stimulus funds to 19 school districts to save and create jobs and improve education for economically disadvantaged youth and students with disabilities. District officials have spent months fine-tuning their spending plans and are now waiting to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Palatine (Dec. 17, *The Daily Herald*) Despite a plea from exercise guru Richard Simmons, the Palatine Township Elementary District 15 school board on Dec. 15 voted unanimously to file for a two-year extension to its current physical education waiver. The waiver, which will expire after the 2011-12 school year, excuses schools from the state's daily P.E. requirement. District 15 has turned to a waiver from the state's P.E. mandate for several years due to a space shortage at its facilities.

Park Ridge (Dec. 17, *Journal & Topics*) Park Ridge-Niles District 64's property tax levy approval was enlivened on Dec. 14 by comments from several angry residents and a no vote on the levy resolution by one school board member. A 2009 levy of \$56.9 million, about 4.9% more than last year's levy amount, was nevertheless approved. The board is asking in this levy for an amount that is less than the 5% ceiling placed on the district by tax cap laws, but more than the district actually expects to receive from the Cook County Collector.

Quincy (Dec. 18, *Quincy Herald-Whig*) The Fourth District Appellate Court has ruled that Freeport

attorney Robert Slattery may not file the 2007 tort immunity case as class-action lawsuits, a victory for Quincy SD 172. "It's affirmation for the district that we had things in order at the time," Superintendent Lonny Lemon said. When Slattery filed the 2006 lawsuit objecting to the way the district was levying and using its tort immunity tax, he asked that all taxpayers be represented in the suit and eligible for refunds as far back as allowed. A lower court had previously ruled that no tax objection lawsuit can be filed as a class-action suit and that there were other legal remedies available. Slattery had filed similar suits in other jurisdictions around the state, and had mixed rulings.

Statewide (Dec. 16, *Northwest Indiana Times*) The Illinois State Board of Education announced recently that Illinois ranks fourth in the nation for having the highest number of teachers achieving National Board Certification this year. In 2009, a total of 732 Illinois teachers achieved National Board Certification. For more information about NBPTS and National Board Certification, visit the NBPTS Web site at <http://www.nbpts.org/>. To search for National Board Certified teachers in Illinois by district, visit http://www.nbpts.org/resources/nbct_directory.

Urbana (Dec. 17, *News-Gazette*, Champaign) Urbana High School put some new initiatives into place last year as part of restructuring under No Child Left Behind to try to keep struggling students from falling through the cracks. The efforts in Urbana SD 116 are paying off, as high school attendance and graduation rates have increased, the number of truant students has dropped and suspensions have decreased. In addition, the high school was just named one of America's best high schools by U.S. News & World Report.

Nominations sought to recognize excellence, distinguished service

IASB annually recognizes those 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 due by 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 Mem-

berships 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, either as an employee or volunteer. Current board members and IASB staff are not eligible recipients.

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

RACE, from page 5

ations or the new rating system categories for teachers or principals

- States that disclosure of teacher, principal, and superintendent performance evaluations is prohibited, and they are not subject to a FOIA request. **SB 315** (PA 96-861) took effect on Jan. 15

A second ISBE "Race to the Top" proposal was also approved, this one to amend the alternative certification provisions of the School Code. Those provisions were added to **SB 616** (PA

96-862). Specifically, the bill:

- allows alternative teacher certification programs to be provided by "various types of qualified providers, including both institutions of higher education and other providers operating independently"
- allows the ISBE, in "cooperation with one or more not-for-profit organizations" which "support excellence in teaching" to approve courses of study for alternative teacher certification

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 19-20 – IASB Leadership Conference, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago

February 20 – IASB Board of Directors' Meeting, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago

February 23 – Shawnee Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Carterville CUSD 5

February 24 – Southwestern Division Spring Dinner Meeting, O'Fallon CCSD 90

February 25 – Two Rivers Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Triopia CUSD 27

February 25 – Illini Division Spring Dinner Meeting, St. Joseph CCSD 169



"I do like vegetables, as long as they're on a hamburger."