

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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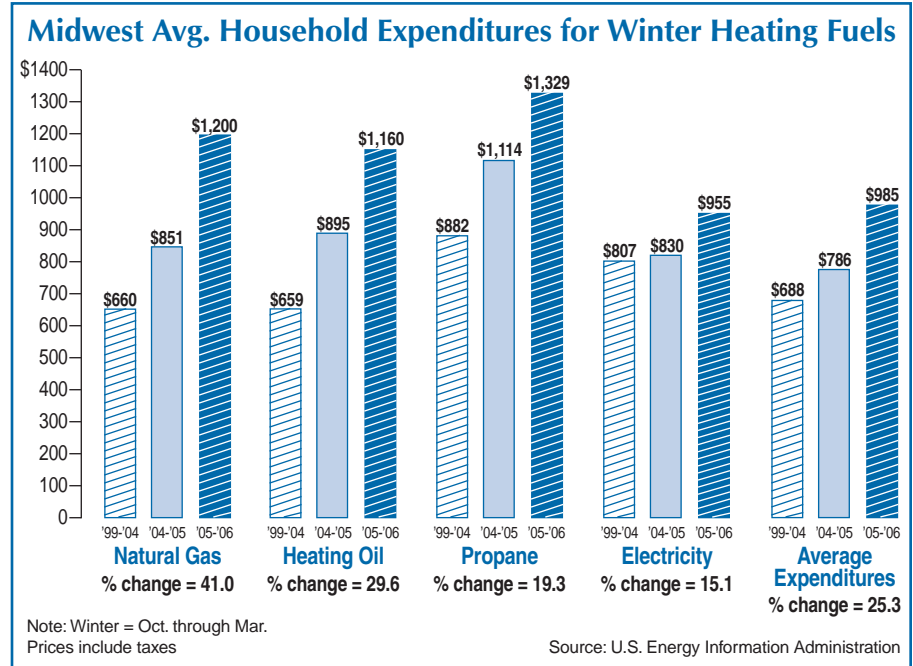
Energy costs soar in spite of mild Illinois winter

Some districts expect to pay \$1 million more for this year's energy bills

Winter energy bills are bringing a pain to homeowners, businesses and schools this year, with many schools spending more on energy than they do on textbooks and classroom technology combined.

The same concerns – soaring prices for natural gas and heating oil – that have hit consumers hard this winter have been pounding school systems as well. As a result, school administrators are pushing efforts to conserve as much energy as possible, from turning off vending machines overnight to banning personal appliances, such as coffee makers for teachers.

The federal Energy Information Administration has forecast that households nationwide will see an average increase of 25 percent in heating bills. Multiplying that by the 3,884 schools that must be heated across Illinois provides the dilemma school officials are facing. Some estimate that it may cost an additional \$45,000 per building for winter heating, which would mean the additional cost for heating all Illinois schools would be approx-



imately \$175 million.

St. Charles CUSD 303 with 17 schools located in the western Chicago suburbs is among those suffering. District officials estimate they'll exceed the district's \$1 million natural gas budget by \$800,000 to \$900,000.

School officials say they have worked hard to cut costs and improve energy efficiency – by installing timers that control heating and air conditioning systems and asking people to

turn off lights and computers when not needed. "This is expected to save thousands of dollars, although the savings may be dwarfed by the higher energy costs this year," according to Dave Zaeger, District 303's assistant superintendent for business.

Nearby Aurora West CUSD 129 uses radio-transmitter thermometers, devices that give a constant read of

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Grants expected by schools serving hurricane kids

Grant applications were recently returned to ISBE from districts serving children displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita last year, but those districts that have applied will soon have additional data to file. A new federal law called the Hurricane Education Recovery Act authorized the grants to provide financial support to schools of up to \$6,000 per student and \$7,500 per student served under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Affected public school districts were given just over two weeks to submit the grant application form. The initial application was to include the enrollment counts for Oct. 1 and Dec. 1, 2005. But enrollment counts for Feb. 1 and April 1, 2006 are to be submitted at a later date.

The state will post updates at <http://www.isbe.net/katrina/default.htm>.

State assessment 'listserv' to cover student testing

ISBE offers an e-mail listserv service available to those who need or want direct information on state testing of students. Members get periodic updates on state testing via e-mail. The information is also posted on the State Board's Web site and in the state superintendent's bulletin.

The listserv is intended to provide a more direct way to receive the announcements and information, although it is not an interactive listserv. Anyone interested in receiving direct information from ISBE's Student Assessment Division may sign up for the listserv by sending a blank e-mail to: assessment-join@list.isbe.net.

Multiplier means confusion for high school sports competition

New rules designed to level the playing field between public and private high schools took effect on Feb. 1, in time for state basketball tournaments and other winter and spring sports championships.

Illinois High School Association (IHSA) member schools voted 450-143 in December for a so-called multiplier that will boost the enrollment of private schools by a factor of 1.65 percent for purposes of placing them into classes for state championship tournaments.

About 30 schools that have competed in Class A will move up to play against larger Class AA schools under the rule. There is no provision for a waiver excluding a school from the multiplier.

IASB Government Relations Director Ben Schwarm was not surprised by the outcome off the month-long vote.

"From everything we had heard, I was pretty certain the vote would be what we saw," Schwarm said. "It's what most school leaders believe is fair."

Supporters say the multiplier will

help restore competitive balance because private schools can draw student athletes from up to 30 miles away while public schools have tighter, locked-in geographic boundaries.

The multiplier is nearly identical to one imposed by the IHSA in March 2005, except that it applies to all private schools rather than only those with more than 450 students.

IHSA officials dropped that multiplier in November to settle a Cook County lawsuit filed by 37 private schools who argued the rule penalized teams for success and put them at a competitive disadvantage. As part of the settlement, the IHSA agreed to let members resolve the ongoing dispute in a binding vote.

"Our member schools thought we needed to take some steps to level the playing field and this is the measure that will accomplish that," said IHSA Executive Director Marty Hickman. Hickman said the new multiplier is less likely to face a court challenge.

For more information about the rule changes, visit the IHSA Web site: <http://www.ihsa.org/announce/2005-06/051229.htm>.

Board members permitted to take tax deductions

School board members are permitted to take a deduction on their federal income tax returns for non-reimbursed expenses arising from board service. The cost of driving to and from board meetings is one such allowable deduction. A board member must itemize to qualify.

For more information see IRS Publication 526, "Charitable Contributions," containing guidelines pertinent to board member deductions. Free copies are available by calling 800/829-3676.

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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Web posting rules, new school laws, take effect

New state laws impacting schools cover a broad range of topics, from mandating that school boards place board agendas and minutes on school district Web sites, to boosting the limit on bonded indebtedness of school districts.

The school board Web publication law, P.A. 94-28, stipulates that a public body that has a Web site maintained by full-time staff must post on its site the agenda of any regular meetings and a notice of the schedule of regular meetings.

The failure to post a notice on the Web will not invalidate any meeting or actions taken at a meeting, according to the new law that took effect on Jan. 1.

A new bond limits law, meanwhile, gives school districts an opportunity to extend their debt capacity. It extends current state laws that had limited school district debt to 13.8 percent of the equalized assessed value (EAV) of the taxable property in the district. The new legislation amends the school code and increases allowable school district debt to be equal to 25 percent. Governor Rod Blago-

Also see *Governor offers few details for schools in annual state address*, page 8

jevich signed the law, which is contained in S.B. 852, on Jan. 6.

On another legislative topic, a bill that would have required school board members to take part in state-sponsored training was introduced in the Illinois House in January as H.B. 4310 (Kosel, R-New Lenox). The sponsor has since agreed to amend the legislation to make it more palatable to school boards.

The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance has opposed the proposal, noting that IASB already provides such training and, in fact, the Association was created for that purpose under Article 23 of the School Code.

When the bill was debated Jan. 12 in the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee, nearly every committee member spoke against burdening school districts with a new unfunded mandate. The committee agreed board training is important, but its members had reservations about requiring training for just one

kind of elected official.

“Most of the participants mentioned the good work being done by their school board members and said that they had been receiving phone calls from school board members stating concerns with the legislation,” said Ben Schwarm, Alliance lobbyist.

A number of other significant new laws took effect recently, including statutory provisions:

- requiring Chicago District 299 to identify students in need of basic health care who can’t afford service but aren’t covered by insurance. (P.A. 94-137)
- providing that the state’s annual mandate waiver report to the legislature must be filed before March 1 (instead of May 1), and giving the legislature 60 days (instead of 30 days) to disapprove the report in whole or in part. (P.A. 94-198)

The full text of each of these new state laws is available at www.ilga.gov/legislation/default.asp.

Source: Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance, *New School Laws 2006*, January 2006.

ISBE rules would limit school choice on food sales

Officials argue over outright state ban

School officials argue that a pending state proposal to ban junk food from elementary and middle schools is overly strict, and tramples local control.

Highland District 5 Superintendent Marvin Warner calls the idea a non-issue. “I don’t know of any districts at the elementary level selling junk food to their kids.”

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) gave initial approval to the guidelines on Dec. 15. But State Board member Dean Clark was one of two members who voted against considering the policy, which was proposed by Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

“They’re dictating something that a fair number of schools already do. I don’t think it’s our decision to make,” Clark said. “It’s not that I’m a big fan of junk food.



Dean Clark

It really comes down to local control. Illinois is big on local control and local school districts should make their own decisions.”

The governor is not proposing legislation. Instead ISBE aims to use its rulemaking authority to set state regulations under the National School Lunch Program to prohibit participating elementary and middle schools — nearly 4,450 schools — from sell-

ing junk food and soda.

Under the proposed rules, which could take effect the first day of 2006-07, all schools that offer eighth-grade classes or below and participate in the federal National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program would have to prohibit the sale to students of any “minimally nutritious items” before school and during the school day.

ISBE has asked for public comment before a final vote on the plan in March. To review the proposal regulation, which would require legislative review before it could take effect, visit the IASB Web site at www.iasb.com/ scroll down to “Governmental Relations” and click on “Proposed Food Rules.”

PRO-Cards help to manage district procurement

How long would it take you to find out how much business the school district has done at a given store, or how much each school or a specific employee is purchasing there, or how much the district has spent on office supplies? PRO-Card technology makes this data available to school administrators online seven days a week, 24 hours per day.

Do you know how much sales tax you have paid and where you need to go to get your sales tax refund? Rather than sifting through every receipt, why not just go online and get a complete report. No special software is needed, only Internet access, and the access to the online details is **free**, with no charges or fees. This information will help your district save up to 40 percent on items that should be purchased under a contract.

For more information, contact Kim Lamansky by phone at 815/753-9083 or by e-mail at lamansky@niu.edu. You may also access this online at www.iasbo.org, click on Pools, Cooperative, Consortiums, then on Procurement Cards.

IASA conference coming to capital

Stand Up for Public Education: The Cornerstone of Our Freedom" is the theme of the 2006 Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), scheduled for April 26-28 in Springfield. It will be held at the Hilton Hotel and the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center (formerly the Renaissance Hotel). A brief summary of the conference program will soon be available online at: <http://www.iasae-du.org/conferences/conf.htm>.

For information, contact IASA at 217/787-9306.

Chicago hosting 66th annual national school board events

Starting on April 8 in Chicago, school leaders – both board members and school administrators – will meet at the National School Boards Association's 66th Annual Conference. Veteran board members and newcomers will meet to discuss the educational challenges they face and the practical solutions to them.

"The strategies you learn through clinic sessions, workshops, roundtables, speakers, and exhibitors can be implemented in your own district," said an NSBA spokesperson.

Through numerous workshops, sessions, and speeches attendees will get tools, tips, and techniques to help make better decisions for their schools. The event will be headquartered at Lakeside Center at McCormick Place. Featured speakers are General Colin Powell, historian David McCullough, conservationist Jane Goodall, and fitness guru Richard Simmons.

Participants can get advance help in choosing from the many sessions and clinics at the event. Topical program tracks are designed to help par-

ticipants select among the diverse interests and issues facing school leaders. The tracks include:

- Alignment. Applying resources to the achievement of district standards and priorities.
- School Law. Preventing litigation and providing updates on legal decisions impacting education.
- Climate. Creating an environment to optimize learning.
- Community Engagement. Leading the community in setting the mission for your district.

Details on registration, housing, speaker biographies, seminar descriptions, and Chicago tours and attractions are available from the NSBA Annual Conference home page on the Internet at <http://www.nsba.org/conference/>. For more information, or to register by phone, call NSBA toll-free at 800/950-6722 and press option "1."



Benefit for hurricane-ravaged districts will be held April 10

A benefit to aid schools in hurricane-damaged areas along the Gulf of Mexico has been rescheduled for April 10. The Illinois Association of School Boards and Morton's, The Steakhouse, 65 East Wacker Place, Chicago, will host the event, called "Hearts for Hurricane Relief," which will include a cocktail reception and dinner buffet.

Devastating hurricane damage in New Orleans forced the National School Boards Association to move its 66th annual conference from New Orleans to Chicago this year. As a result, IASB Executive Director Michael D. Johnson said Morton's wanted to do something for the schools and IASB agreed to the partnership.

Morton's will be closed to the general public in order to host the event on the evening of April 10. Tickets are \$200 each. Funds raised will be divided equally among the school relief funds of the Louisiana School Boards Association, Mississippi School Boards Association and Alabama Association of School Boards, and will be distributed to the schools damaged by Hurricane Katrina. School board members, administrators, educators, and other associates of the educational community are invited to purchase tickets.

Tickets still can be obtained by calling Carla Bolt at either IASB office, in Springfield at 217/528-9688 or in Lombard at 630/629-3776, at ext. 1140.

Distinguished service award nominations are due April 14

IASB annually recognizes people, agencies, corporations or non-governmental organizations whose actions have contributed to excellence in Illinois education. Nominations are now being sought for award recognition of the Harold P. Seamon Award for Distinguished Service to public education.

Recipients must have: 1) displayed exceptional service and commitment to public education in Illinois or; 2) provided innovative and creative approaches to meeting the challenges facing public education; or 3) enhanced local, lay control of, and responsibility for, the governance of public education by school boards.

The award activity should extend statewide or have an impact on a large region. Only one such award may be given annually. The nomination deadline is April 14. Outstanding nominees are sought from all walks of life—it's not just for educators. IASB will present the award at the 2006 Joint Annual Conference in November.

In addition, IASB Honorary Memberships for Exceptional Service are awarded for distinguished service to IASB or to public education. Contributions may be district-wide or regional. Up to three awards may be given each year and are presented at regional meetings.

Submit a brief letter of nomination for either award by April 14 to the awards committee liaison. Current board members and IASB staff are not eligible recipients.

IASB also offers the IASB Service Award to an individual who: 1) has given 25 years of service to schools and children; 2) has had a positive impact through that service; and 3) has had a close affiliation with and been of direct service to schools as an employee or volunteer. There is no nominations deadline.

Submit nominations to: IASB Awards Committee Liaison, 2921 Baker Drive, Springfield, IL 62703-5929; for more information phone IASB at 217/528-9688, ext. 1139, or fax 217/753-2485.

LeaderShop schedules spring training

IASB is offering a full slate of LeaderShop workshops in various locations around the state between now and April. The school leadership development opportunities will cover three topics: 1) School Board Leadership; 2) Focus: Achieving Your Highest Priorities; and 3) The Board's First Responsibility: Detecting and Communicating a Compelling Vision.

School leaders should mark their calendars now and watch for detailed

workshop and registration information – either in the mail or online at www.iasb.com – for each workshop date listed below:

Focus: Achieving Your Highest Priorities

(elective, a FranklinCovey workshop)

- February 18 – Naperville
- March 4 – Springfield

The Board's First Responsibility: Detecting and Communicating a Compelling Vision (core)

- March 18 – Alsip
- March 25 – Decatur
- April 29 – Carterville

NEWS FROM IASB

IASB to offer job fair for teachers and administrators

The 11th annual IASB Job Fair for teachers, administrators and education majors will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on March 18 at Saint Xavier University, Shannon Center, 3700 West 103rd Street, Chicago. Advance registration and fee are required for participating districts.

The first 10 job fairs identified hundreds of qualified job applicants at all grade and building levels and this year's fair is a chance to meet many such candidates.

The registration fee for recruiters is \$300 and includes an exhibit booth, breakfast and boxed lunch. For more information or to reserve your district's spot, contact Bridget Trojan at IASB. Reach her via e-mail at btrojan@iasb.com or call 630/629-3776, extension 1236. Space is limited.

Spring division meetings feature legislative updates

The IASB division dinner meetings this spring will commonly feature presentations on legislative issues by IASB Governmental Relations staffers. The discussion will cover the latest information from the Capitol on mandatory school board training, school consolidation, the junk food ban for elementary and middle schools, and other breaking legislative issues.

Another hot topic on tap at one division meeting will be new ideas for increasing student learning from the Consortium for Educational Change. Audrey Soglin, Executive Director, CEC, will facilitate this discussion at the **Southwestern Division** dinner meeting at Delores Moyer Elementary School, O'Fallon, on Wednesday, March 1.

For more information on the presentation — and many others planned for the spring — visit IASB at www.iasb.com/calendar/.

Read the Newsbulletin Online!

Available in hypertext or PDF file versions.

ENERGY *from page 1*

the temperature, lighting and humidity in every classroom so that the energy manager can tweak and control the settings, saving the district thousands of dollars.

Another suburban district, Oswego CUSD 308, has replaced lighting at most of its 17 schools with more energy-conserving lamps. As with many fixes, though, other problems can arise. "The tradeoff there is that the replacement bulbs are really expensive," admitted one school administrator. However, "We're working with it, trying to get a better price on our bulbs," she said.

Above all, however, administrators are adamant that all energy-conserving measures be taken with the students in mind. It doesn't make sense to turn down the heat so much, for example, that students can't concentrate. "We're just trying to make every-

body aware of the need to conserve, and let them know how they can help us save. We brought it to people's attention to be very energy efficient with simple little things," said East Richland CUSD 1 Superintendent Marilyn Holt, citing such examples as turning off lights and computers.

"Like many conservation steps that we take, we're still aware of the human element," Holt said.

Geothermal option

Energy conservation can also mean new designs, like geothermal heat exchange. More than 1,000 schools nationwide have geothermal systems, but only four in Illinois. One is a new school under construction in south suburban Elementary District 159, Matteson. District 159 expects to save \$70,000 a year on heating and cooling costs from its geothermal system.

The savings estimate is based on a study done in 2004 for the middle school, which is to house sixth- through eighth-grade students, said Vuk Vujovic, director of sustainable design for the Waukegan offices of Legat Architects, Inc. An IASB Service Associates firm, Legat designed the entire project, which carries a \$21 million price-tag, including \$440,000 extra for the geo-



St. Charles CUSD 303 Superintendent Barbara Erwin greets students as they board a bus. The District has purchased more energy-efficient school buses.

thermal energy system.

Schools can also economize through the Illinois Energy Consortium (IEC), a joint energy purchasing consortium sponsored by IASB, IASA and IASBO. It is designed to lower utility costs for Illinois school districts and community colleges.

Currently the IEC is making natural gas available to school districts at a considerably lower cost than market averages, "about ten to 20 percent lower," according to IEC administrator Ron Steigerwald. This is possible because the consortium buys natural gas at regular intervals over a three-year period, Steigerwald stated. "We can buy when we think the price is low," he explained. For more information about the IEC, visit their Web site at: <http://www.illec.org/welcome.htm>.

How some districts are saving on energy costs

- Turning down the thermostat a few degrees and encouraging warmer dress.
- Installing new heating systems using energy other than gas and electricity, such as geothermal exchange systems at Cuba High School in Fulton County C.U.S.D. 3.
- Conserving energy by turning off lights whenever possible.
- Banning personal appliances.
- Shortening school days or going to four-day weeks. Schools in six states — Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, New Mexico, South Dakota and Wyoming — have gone to a four-day week as a way to save money. Closer to home, however, no Illinois districts have done this so far, although New Lenox District 122 has been pleased with energy savings after instituting a temporary four-day work week for summer school last year.

Deadlines loom for teacher non-renewal

State law requires school districts to serve written notice 45 days before the end of the school term to probationary teachers who aren't being reemployed for the following term. Notice is required 60 days before the end of the term for any tenured teacher being honorably discharged because of a Reduction-in-Force (RIF) or the discontinuation of a program.

Notice must be given directly and mailed to the teacher, either by certified mail, return receipt requested,

or personal delivery with receipt, along with a statement of honorable dismissal and the reason for it. Under some circumstances these provisions also apply to the dismissal of an administrator. Any employee not properly notified is deemed reemployed.

Because collective bargaining agreements, policies or evaluation plans commonly have their own notice requirements, employers must be careful to meet all of the relevant notice requirements.

Court date set for lawsuit over NCLB special ed issues

Several Illinois schools will face off with the federal government over requirements for special needs students spelled out in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

Ottawa THSD 140 Superintendent Tom Jobst, who has headed up the litigation push, told the District 140 Board of Education on Dec. 19 that a federal court date has been set for Sept. 12 in Chicago.

Ottawa THSD 140 – along with Ottawa Elementary District 141, Streator Elementary District 44, and Wheeling CCSD 121 – argues that NCLB violates the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act by mandating that special needs students be required to achieve at the same level as their peers, rather than being taught at their own pace as IDEA requires.

National School Boards Association (NSBA) attorney Tom Hutton believes the lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, against the federal and state government may have a chance.

Sex offender loses right to anonymity in court

A U.S. District Court in Urbana ruled on Dec. 9 that a convicted sex offender must proceed under his real name in his lawsuit challenging strict sex offender policies adopted by two local school districts.

He had filed a complaint against Crestwood CUSD 4 and Paris District 95 challenging comprehensive district policies that bar him from participating in his children's school activities.

Tougher new school board policies were adopted to reflect the state's 2005 amended sex offender law. That law was written to close a loophole allowing convicted sex offender parents or guardians to be present on school grounds without restriction.

NEWS HEADLINES

Abingdon-Knoxville (Dec. 21, *The Register-Mail*, Galesburg) A joint committee's final report is nearing completion on a proposed consolidated district joining Knoxville District 202 and Abingdon District 217.

Cahokia (Dec. 21, *Belleville News-Democrat*) Morris School's annual holiday show in Cahokia CUSD 187 went multicultural as a winter fest replaced the school's Christmas show.

Eureka (Dec. 21, *The Journal Star*, Peoria) School officials and representatives of other local taxing districts all had the same message for the Woodford County Board on Dec. 20: Don't take the issue of property tax limits to voters. Thus the county board voted against placing so-called tax caps on the March ballot.

Kewanee (Dec. 21, *The Star Courier*, Kewanee) Kewanee CUSD 229 agreed to send representatives to meet with neighboring district board leaders on combining the district with both Wethersfield CUSD 230 and Neponset CUSD 187.

Lockport (Jan. 12, *The Herald News*, Joliet) Milne-Kelvin Grove District 91 school officials are checking to see if certain students live in their district. Administrators will be hiring an investigator at \$55 per hour to resolve residency discrepancies involving four families, leaders said during a Jan. 10 board meeting.

Lockport (Jan. 12, *The Herald News*, Joliet) Milne-Kelvin Grove school administrators amended more than two years of meeting minutes to get into compliance with the Illinois Open Meetings Act. Late last year the Illinois attorney general's office cited the district for not listing in board minutes why officials met behind closed doors.

Macomb (Jan. 11, *The Journal Star*, Peoria) A county court judge declined to reconsider his ruling on a school detachment issue, denying a motion by attorneys for Schuyler-

Industry CUSD 5. The motion sought to reverse an October ruling that sent the case back to the regional board for clarification on the 15 students who want to detach from the district.

Naperville (Jan. 12, *The Naperville Sun*) Developers of a subdivision offered a compromise to alleviate school concerns in Naperville District 204: The developers would create a legally binding document notifying the new homeowners that their kids would not necessarily go to the closest school. The district would determine where they should be sent.

Peoria (Dec. 20, *The Journal Star*, Peoria) The board receives a plan to phase out career academies at three District 150 high schools beginning next school year, meaning the academies won't be accepting new students.

Plainfield (Dec. 9, *Chicago Tribune*) District 202 announced plans to work with parents to boost minority teacher and administrator numbers in order to better reflect the student body makeup, officials said.

Plainfield (Jan. 12, *The Herald News*, Joliet) The school district closed a deal with the city of Joliet regarding transition fees for Plainfield schools, where many Joliet students attend.

Rockford (Jan. 10, *Rockford Register Star*) Three schools learn they are among 220 schools in the state that will face the harshest sanctions available under the No Child Left Behind Act. The sanctions, which could include restructuring, were incurred by falling short of the NCLB target for adequate yearly progress on standardized tests for five years.

Waterloo (Dec. 31, *Belleville News-Democrat*) A large budget deficit and the need for a new high school caused CUSD 5 to seek referendums in March to decide on a school tax increase and \$35 million bond issue.

Governor offers few details for schools in annual state address

In his fourth State of the State message, Gov. Rod Blagojevich did not mention any changes to school funding, nor did he propose revenue sources for new programs he did propose, including a \$1,000 annual tax credit for college freshmen and sophomores.



Rod Blagojevich

The governor provided few details about most of his other proposals, as well, including the centerpiece of his speech: a \$3.2 billion construction plan for new schools, roads and mass transit. Of this \$3.2 billion, the governor proposed that \$500 million be made available for school construction and \$50 million for school maintenance grants.

About \$150 million of this amount would be prioritized for Chicago public schools and the 23 school districts that have received grant entitlements but have been waiting for the state to provide the promised funding (you can find a list of the 23 districts at: www.isbe.net/construction/pdf/sc_ranking.pdf). The remainder of the funding would be distributed to school districts that have already applied.

Both Republican and Democrat legislators were skeptical about the governor's spending plans, however, noting the state's ongoing fiscal prob-

lems and questioning how his capital improvements would be funded and the money doled out.

"Everything he mentioned means more spending or more borrowing, and we don't have any money," said Rep. Bill Black, R-Danville.

A preview of the governor's budget for schools was glimpsed at the ISBE board meeting on Jan. 18, when the board discussed an outline of the Fiscal Year 2007 education budget. Insiders believe the governor had a hand in the ISBE's recommendation and is supportive of it.

As ISBE discussed, elementary and secondary education would see an increase of about \$350 million over the FY '06 funding level. This would include an increase in the per pupil foundation level of \$170, at a cost of about \$240 million.

The mandated categorical grants would be funded at the FY '06 levels. The line items for the Free and Reduced Lunch program, and regular orphanage reimbursement, would be funded at the 100 percent level. The line items for most special education reimbursements, and regular transportation reimbursement, would be funded at the 90-100 percent level.

To examine the full FY '07 budget request, visit www.isbe.net and click on "FY '07 Budget Request" under "Hot Topics and Resources."

Calendar of events

- February 28 – North Cook-DuPage Divisions' Education Forum**, Crystal Palace Banquets, Park Ridge, 6:30 p.m. Dinner
- March 1 – Central IL Valley Spring Dinner Meeting**, IL Valley Central CUSD 321, 6 p.m. Dinner
- March 1 – Southwestern Division Spring Dinner Meeting**, O'Fallon CCSD 90, 6:30 p.m. Dinner
- March 2 – Abe Lincoln Division Spring Dinner Meeting**, Lincoln CHSD 404, 6:30 p.m. Dinner
- March 2 – Northwest Division Dinner Meeting**, Rafters, Lena, 6 p.m. Dinner
- March 2 – Blackhawk Division Spring Dinner Meeting**, Cambridge CUSD 227, 6 p.m. Dinner
- March 2 – Egyptian Division Spring Dinner Meeting**, Northside School, Fairfield PSD 112, 6:30 p.m. Dinner
- March 4 – Focus: Achieving Your Highest Priorities Workshop**, Hilton Garden Inn, Springfield, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.
- March 7 – Shawnee Division Spring Dinner Meeting**, Herrin High School, Herrin CUSD 4, 6:30 p.m. Dinner
- March 7 – Corn Belt Division Spring Dinner Meeting**, Pontiac Junior-High School; Pontiac CCSD 429, 6 p.m. Dinner
- March 8 – Kaskaskia Division Spring Dinner Meeting**, Northwestern CUSD 2, 6 p.m. Dinner
- March 9 – Western Division Spring Dinner Meeting**, Bushnell-Prairie City CUSD 170, 6 p.m. Dinner

For more information about coming events, see the IASB Web site at www.iasb.com/calendar/



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