

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD *Newsbulletin*

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Illinois delegates to the Federal Relations Network Conference plan their trip to Capitol Hill. Clockwise from bottom left: Mark C. Metzger, Benjamin Schwarm, Michael Bartlett, Michael Kelly, John Jekot, Susan Hilton, Marie Slater, Michael D. Johnson, Joseph Alesandrini and Christy Coleman.

Referenda results find tax increases faring quite badly

But most bond issues win voter approval

Tax increase propositions did not fare well at all in the Feb. 5 primary election. A preliminary count indicates voters approved just two of 13 education fund tax increase proposals and neither of two proposals to increase operations and maintenance funds. The school districts that won approval for education fund tax increases were McLean CUSD 5, Normal, and Schiller Park SD 81.

Overall the approval rate for tax increases was just 13 percent, by far the lowest rate seen in any primary election in an even-numbered year in recent memory. Explanations for this low rate could relate to voter-perceptions about the health of the nation's economy, as many experts now believe the United States is in the midst of an economic recession. Or it could be due to growing dissatisfaction with the level of property taxes already shouldered by homeowners.

Voters did adopt one other tax

See **REFERENDA** on page 3

Election year may delay NCLB renewal until 2011 unless work completed soon

If action on the No Child Left Behind Act is not completed by this spring, lawmakers and officials from the National School Boards Association all agree it could be well into 2011 before a reauthorization bill is passed and any substantial changes are made.

That was the message as more than 900 school board members and association staff converged on Washington, D.C., Feb. 3-5 for the 35th annual Federal Relations Network Conference, sponsored by NSBA. Forty-

eight states plus the Virgin Islands were represented this year.

In addition to two days of intensive issue briefings, delegates listened to featured speakers Freeman Hrabowski, president of the University of Maryland Baltimore County, and U.S. Senator Chuck Hagel (R-NE).

Hrabowski, who did his graduate studies at the University of Illinois in Urbana/Champaign, told delegates that what they were doing in Washington would have an impact even on

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School leaders unhappy with ISBE finance services

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Funding available for reorganization feasibility

Funding is now available for FY 2008 School District Reorganization Feasibility Studies. A feasibility study is a tool to be used by school districts investigating the pros and cons of reorganization options. Interested districts should submit a proposed agreement with independent contractor(s) to their Regional Office of Education (ROE). The ROE will submit the agreement to the State Board of Education (ISBE) for approval.

Studies to be funded are between \$4,500 and \$8,000. Funds are available on a "first come – first served" basis. In order to receive study funds in FY 2008, studies must be completed and approved for payment by June 30.

Procedures, funding allotment and sample forms are available at: <http://www.isbe.net/sfms/html/feasibility.htm>.

For more information contact ISBE's Michelle Heninger, School Business and Support Services, at 217-785-8779 or e-mail her at mheninger@isbe.net.

Forty-three districts get fast-growth district grants

The State Board of Education recently announced that 43 districts will receive \$7.5 million in fast-growth grants for the 2007-2008 school year. The fast-growth grants, which are the first since 2005, are provided to help districts meet the needs associated with rapidly growing student populations.

Public school enrollment in Illinois has increased steadily from 1,951,998 in 1998 to 2,077,856 in 2007. In the last decade, student enrollment increased by 125,858 or 6.4 percent. During that same time, the number of school districts in Illinois dropped from 900 to 871.

ISBE proposes \$300.8 million hike in FY'09 budget for public schools

The state budget for elementary and secondary education would increase by \$300.8 million or 4.28 percent next year under a Jan. 17 recommendation from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). That is only about half the level of increase enacted last year, when the State Board called for an \$801.6 million increase, 12.2 percent, and state leaders finally enacted a \$560 million increase, or 8.6 percent.

Of the \$300.8 million in new funding proposed for schools, only \$67.66 million is earmarked to boost state aid per pupil. ...This follows a large increase last year totaling nearly \$209 million.

General state aid would receive a 1.52 percent funding increase under the proposed budget. The state board requested a total of \$4.52 billion in general state aid, the money set aside for per pupil funding.

The state board did suggest major funding increases in several key programs, from the hold-harmless provision for General State Aid that ensures that no district gets less GSA funding than last year, up 34.45 percent; to early childhood education, up 12.94 percent. Funding for mandated categorical grant programs, including special education, would receive a 7.94 percent increase under the spending plan. Special ed transportation, a subcategory of the special ed categorical line item would get an 8.46 percent increase.

The largest percentage increase proposed for any significant funding category would go towards standards, assessments and accountability, which

would get a 64.49 percent increase. That translates to a \$15.3 million increase. Much of that money (\$12.6 million) would go to pay for improved assessments, particularly bilingual assessments, as required under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

Of the \$300.8 million in new funding proposed for schools, only \$67.66 million is earmarked to boost state aid per pupil. With the major expansion of hold-harmless funding added, the general state aid increase comes to \$74.79 million. This follows a large increase last year totaling nearly \$209 million.

Suggested state aid per pupil is far less than the funding level proposed by the Education Funding Advisory Board, the state's school finance advisory panel.

The state board's spending proposal has been sent to the governor, who delivered his own budget proposal for fiscal year 2009 on Feb. 20.

The legislature will have the final vote on the entire state budget – including the education budget – later in the spring.

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

Illinois Association of School Boards

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REFERENDA *from page 1*

increase – a countywide sales tax proposition to benefit schools in Williamson County. The sales tax was proposed by the county board under a new state law, and it narrowly won voter approval. Revenue from the new one-cent-on-the-dollar sales tax will benefit all five school districts in the southern Illinois county. The five districts – **Johnston City CUSD 1**; **Marion CUSD 2**; **Crab Orchard CUSD 3**, Marion; **Herrin CUSD 4**; and **Carterville CUSD 5** – will split an estimated \$7.5 million each year, with the funds to be used to construct new buildings and pay off related debt.

Success was far more common for bond issues on the February ballot, as 13 of 18 building bond issues were adopted, for a 72 percent passage rate. Building bond propositions were adopted in the following districts:

Mundelein Elementary District 75
(two bond issues)
DeKalb CUSD 428
Glen Ellyn CCSD 89
Grant Community High School District 124, Fox Lake
Kaneland CUSD 302, Maple Park

Minooka CCSD 201
Naperville CUSD 203
McLean County CUSD 5, Normal
Rochester CUSD 3A
Rock Island SD 41
Schiller Park SD 81
Wheaton CUSD 200

In addition to these 13 building bond issues, a lone working cash fund proposition was also on the ballot. Voters in **Big Hollow SD 38**, Ingleside, authorized the issuance of \$10 million in working cash fund bonds.

And a lone funding bond issue was also placed on the ballot. Voters in **Country Club Hills District 160** approved the issuance of \$8 million in bonds. The funds will be earmarked to pay claims against the district.

In other action, voters approved a school district consolidation between two districts in Livingston County. It was the lone school district consolidation on the ballot. The approved consolidation will form a new unit district by combining all the territory within **Cornell Community High School District 70**, and **Flanagan CUSD 4**.

Meanwhile, voters in **Nauvoo-**

Colusa CUSD 325 and **Warsaw CUSD 316** overwhelmingly approved a dual deactivation plan. Voter approval was needed to enable Nauvoo-Colusa to send its high school students to Warsaw while Warsaw sends its junior high students to Nauvoo-Colusa beginning next fall. Curriculum enhancements were a key selling point .

Voters in a school district in portions of Winnebago and Stephenson Counties, **Durand CUSD 322**, decided in favor of electing school board members at large, without restriction by area of residence within the school district. A similar plan was adopted in **Momence CUSD 1**, in Kankakee County.

But there were other education-related issues decided. Peoria District 150 voters, for example, elected to return the school board vice president to office under Article 33 of the School Code.

Finally, voters in Warren, Henderson and Mercer counties decided there will be a contested race in November for the area's regional superintendent of schools.

ELECTION *from page 1*

the nation's unborn children. "The connection is between what you do as school board members and democracy," he said. "Democracy needs to be born in every generation and education is its midwife."

He emphasized the importance that NCLB has focused on reading by telling how his grandmother had to pass a literacy test at age 70 in order to be able to vote and commended school board members for their leadership, encouraging them to be the kind of leaders to energize and elevate, not those "who suck every ounce of energy out of your body."

Senator Hagel, who is retiring from the Senate after this year, said education is at the core of all the great challenges that the United States will face. And he also acknowledged that many of his fellow Congressmen do

not appreciate the contributions of school board members or even understand the importance of what they do.

Hagel predicted that the next president, no matter which party is elected, will deal with more challenges than ever before, partly because of the inability of Congress to fix anything in the past eight years. "We can't continue to be bogged down in a political paralysis," he added. "There has to be a core of consensus to solve our problems."

Due to the Super Tuesday primary at home, delegates from Illinois met with staff instead of directly with members of Congress this year. Offices visited included Senators Dick Durbin (D) and Barack Obama (D) and Representatives Peter Roskam (R-6), Janice Schakowsky (D-9), Judy Biggert

(R-13), Phil Hare (D-17) and John Shimkus (R-19).

Illinois' FRN delegates this year were: Mark C. Metzger, IASB president, **Indian Prairie CUSD 204**, Aurora; Joseph Alesandrini, IASB vice president, **Pekin CHSD 303**; Marie Slater, IASB immediate past president, **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**; Tariq Butt, IASB board of directors, **Chicago District 299**; Christy Coleman, **Geneseo CUSD 228**; Michael Kelly, **Plainfield CCSD 202**; and John Jekot, **East Maine SD 63**.

IASB staff at the conference were: Michael D. Johnson, executive director; Michael Bartlett, deputy executive director; Benjamin Schwarm, associate executive director; Linda Dawson, director, editorial services, and Susan Hilton, assistant director, governmental relations.

Quality Counts Grading Breakdown

This table reports the detailed scoring behind the grades for the six major topics examined in *Quality Counts*. Scores for those major categories are the average of the respective subcategory scores.

Chance for success	IL	U.S.	Transitions and alignment	IL	U.S.
<i>Early foundations</i>	83.4	81.4	<i>Early-childhood education</i>	80.0	78.6
<i>School years</i>	78.3	74.8	<i>College readiness</i>	60.0	58.4
<i>Adult outcomes</i>	84.6	81.6	<i>Economy and workforce</i>	75.0	85.3
K-12 achievement			The teaching profession		
<i>Status</i>	64.3	62.4	<i>Accountability for quality</i>	71.9	72.9
<i>Change</i>	67.0	71.5	<i>Incentives and allocation</i>	73.5	73.0
<i>Equity</i>	81.2	77.9	<i>Building and supporting capacity</i>	58.8	73.2
Standards, assessments, and accountability			School finance		
<i>Standards</i>	65.8	81.6	<i>Equity</i>	83.0	84.9
<i>Assessments</i>	86.7	83.9	<i>Spending</i>	63.4	70.3
<i>School accountability</i>	80.0	85.3			

Grading Curve A (93-100), A- (90-92), B+ (87-89), B (83-86), B- (80-82), C+ (77-79), C (73-76), C- (70-72), D+ (67-69), D (63-66), D- (60-62), F (0-59)

Source: Quality Counts' state report for Illinois.

Springfield reassigns high school principals under NCLB provisions

All three principals at Springfield District 186 public high schools will be transferred to the district's central office next school year.

The district announced the reassignments on Jan. 24 under terms of a district-wide restructuring plan necessitated by the district's failure to meet state and federal benchmarks, according to Superintendent Walter Milton Jr. Milton noted he plans to create smaller schools-within-the-schools at each high school as part of the revamp.

Some other administrators and school principals are being reassigned, as well, and changes have been made at the Springfield district's central office, eliminating some positions and creating others.

The district made the moves after a notice was received from the Illinois State Board of Education stating that the district needed to prepare a restructuring plan after having consistently failed to meet federal NCLB benchmarks for five years. In such circumstances, ISBE offers a school district several restructuring choices, including one for a realignment of staff.

"Federal and state regulations require that the district must develop a restructuring plan for schools," Milton said in a memo sent to school employees. "As a district, we must develop restructuring plans, which are intended to effect significant and positive change in our schools."

For the past few years, the ISBE has placed the Springfield district on "academic watch status." Once failing to meet expectations after the fifth year on this list, a restructuring plan is required. After a sixth year of non-compliance, the plan must be put into effect.

State approval is pending, but the District 186 school board already has given Milton the go-ahead.

State gets passing grade on quality of education system, new study finds

Illinois' educational systems received a passing grade for educational performance but researchers said the state trails the nation in uniform standards for assessment, college preparation and work force readiness. The findings were contained in the Jan. 10 "Quality Counts" report, which examined six areas of educational performance based on survey results in all 50 states last year.

Overall, the Washington, D.C.-based research group at *Education Week* gave the U.S. education system a "C," calling for cradle-to-career curriculum to help students adjust from preschool to K-12, and on to college and their chosen professions. Each state was awarded an overall, comparable grade as well as individual grades. Illinois got a "C" grade overall.

The 12th annual edition of *Education Week's Quality Counts* continued the framework launched in last year's report. But it also reintroduced some of the categories in which it has graded states in the past after drop-

ping grading last year.

The report's cradle-to-career perspective emphasizes the connections between K-12 education and other systems with which it intersects: preschool education, other social and economic institutions, and further education and training.

Most of the 50-state indicators that appear in *Quality Counts* are based on original data analyses and state-survey data from the EPE Research Center. But the group also draws on published information from a number of outside organizations. The methodology section provides a more detailed description of research indicators and procedures for grading the states. (The District of Columbia was also treated as a state throughout this analysis.)

States were awarded overall letter grades based on their ratings across six areas of performance and policy: chance for success; K-12 achievement; standards, assessments, and accountability; transitions and alignment; the teaching profession; and school finance (see chart).

Wellness panel hits lack of implementation plans

Finds policies have been adopted widely

The Illinois School Wellness Policy Task Force recently issued its final report, in compliance with Public Act 94-199, reviewing the effectiveness of state-mandated local district “wellness policies.” Results indicate that, while the required wellness policies may have been adopted in most places, many school districts do not have written implementation plans to flesh out local plans. But that may be true partly because there has not been adequate time available to write implementation plans since the policies were adopted.

A representative sampling of districts was randomly selected, and task force members conducted interviews in six chosen school districts. The six chosen districts are not identified in the report.

The task force asked questions about compliance in six key areas: policy implementation, nutrition guidelines, nutrition education, physical education and activity, environment,

and staff wellness.

Questions were selected to determine whether districts had adopted and implemented a local wellness policy. Districts completed a survey, which was followed by an on-site interview to collect anecdotal evidence of local wellness policy implementation. Conclusions of the task force included these key points:

- While policies have been adopted, implementation of these policies at the district level is limited. While six districts had adopted a policy, only two had a written implementation plan. This is a “serious” concern.
- The evaluation process came too soon after the adoption of local wellness policies to allow school districts adequate time to implement their policies. The survey only reflects progress to date.
- While some districts surveyed were already addressing wellness issues, for those districts where this is a new endeavor, it will take more than one school year to begin making

enough changes to affect a better school wellness environment.

- Schools are struggling to make decisions and changes in the status quo because they do not have a strong implementation model or program to follow. Adoption of a statewide coordinated school health model would facilitate implementation.
- Some changes in vending may have been promulgated by the Illinois School Code Part 305 Rules rather than local wellness policies.

The task force had submitted nutrition standards recommendations to the governor’s office and the legislature last year, and then moved into this final evaluation phase during the last year of its three-year charge. The duties of the task force have now been completed, and it is up to state lawmakers to decide what to do with the conclusions and advice contained in this report.

For a look at the full report, visit the Web site at: http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/task_force_report.pdf.

IASB to offer annual job fair in March for teachers and school administrators

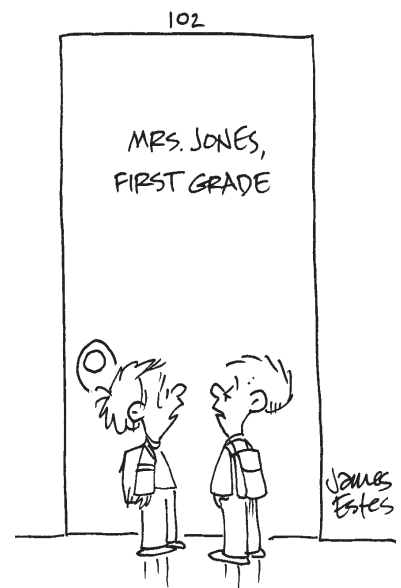
The 13th annual IASB Job Fair for Teachers, Administrators and Education Majors will be held from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, March 15, at Shannon Center on the campus of Saint Xavier University, 3700 West 103rd Street, Chicago. The purpose is to assist districts in finding and hiring qualified teachers and administrators.

Past job fairs have identified hundreds of job applicants at all grade and building levels. Last year, the fair attracted recruiters from a total of 47 school districts and recruiting organizations. There were 620 online registrations for job candidates and

approximately 250 such registrations on site. The job fair represents an opportunity for school leaders to meet many of these candidates early in the search process.

Unfortunately space is no longer available for recruiters, but registration is still open to job applicants, although a fee is required. There is a \$5 non-refundable advance registration fee or \$10 at the door. Advance registration closes on March 11, at 4:30 p.m.

For more information contact Loretta Cotten at IASB at: lcotten@iasb.com or call 630/629-3776, extension 1237.



“Man, listen to all that sobbing — some kid is really catching it!”
“She’s in there by herself.”



There is currently a \$50 fee for taking a drivers' education course unless a state waiver is obtained for a public school facility like this one in Chicago. Some districts have received waivers to cover more of the actual cost, and some charge \$300 or more.

State board votes to let local school boards decide drivers' ed fee amount

The Illinois State Board of Education voted unanimously in January to recommend that the legislature re-evaluate the drivers' education fee currently established and allow the amount of such fees to be a local decision, to be settled following a public forum discussion. The action came in response to school leaders' concerns after some said they need more funds to operate the mandated program.

In an annual report to the legislature, the state board suggested that the standard \$50 maximum drivers' education fee, which has not been raised in 20 years, be re-examined due to the growing number of districts seeking increases under the state waiver law.

"This is something that we will be looking at over the next year. There is not a firm recommendation on what that (fee) should be raised to, but it should be looked at," said Rebecca

Watts, a board spokeswoman.

Currently, individual districts can increase the fee if a waiver request is approved by the General Assembly. In November, the legislature approved a \$500 per student fee, the highest increase to date for a school district.

High schools are required by the state to offer a drivers' education course, which must include classroom instruction and at least six hours of behind-the-wheel training. The six-hour requirement, double the old standard, was one of the key changes the legislature approved last year to beef up drivers' education.

Scores of districts already have requested a waiver from the state regarding the new requirement for six hours of driving.

The reimbursement rate for drivers' ed is evaluated by the state every year, even though the rate for all districts has not been raised in 20 years.

Deadlines approach for any teacher RIF notices to be given

School districts are required by statute to serve written notice 60 days before the end of the school term for any tenured teacher being honorably discharged because of a Reduction-in-Force (RIF) or discontinuance of teaching service. Thus, there is no single fixed deadline date for all schools statewide; the date of the end of the school term is the determining factor.

A written notice must be mailed to the teacher and also given to the teacher. It must go out 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 their relevant notice requirements.

ISBE seeks power to investigate charges of teacher misconduct

ISBE is seeking legislative approval to launch a new program to investigate teacher misconduct allegations throughout the state. The state agency wants to add \$750,000 in FY 2009 to fund the start-up program beginning July 1.

"If there is a focus of resources on investigating and prosecuting misconduct in a consistent fashion, everyone in the state will be more aware of what conduct is expected," explains Darren Reisberg, general counsel for the ISBE.

All but seven states already employ state investigators to look

See **MISCONDUCT** on page 8

NEWS HEADLINES

Channahon (Jan. 25, *Morris Daily Herald*) The village board has officially requested that Minooka Community High School put Channahon in the name of the new branch of their school, calling it “Minooka Community High School, Channahon Campus.” Channahon’s village president said the new school, still under construction, is in Channahon, not Minooka.

Chicago (Jan. 24, *Chicago Tribune*) Chicago Board of Education members agreed on Jan. 23 to approve a revised policy to impose new limits on military recruiters at Chicago public high schools. Juniors and seniors will now have until Dec. 1 each year to bar military officials from being able to obtain private information about them. Recruiters are barred from recruiting without authorization from school officials. They also must give two days notice before visiting a school.

Chicago (Jan. 24, *Chicago Tribune*) Board members quickly assured roughly 100 unhappy people attending the Chicago District 299 board meeting on Dec. 23 that a plan to move the Edison Regional Gifted Center to a building in the Albany Park neighborhood is not final. Board members said no plan would be enacted without hearing and further deliberation. Parents and community leaders spoke out against the plan and proposals to close two schools and phase out one other.

Chicago (Jan. 25, *Chicago Tribune*) Eleven schools will be either relocated, phased out, consolidated or closed in a plan announced by Chicago District 299 chief executive Arne Duncan on Jan. 24. The plan aims to address low enrollment and it also calls for eight failing schools to be “turned around,” with 200 teachers and seven principals possibly being replaced with better-performing, better-qualified educators. Speak-

ing about the turnaround idea, Duncan said it is necessary to jump-start academic improvement in schools that have been stuck in a rut of poor performance. He said success will lie in bringing in better teachers with higher expectations.

Elgin (Jan. 15, *Courier News*) The School District U46 Board of Education approved a three-year contract agreement on Jan. 14 between the teachers union and the district. More than 24 months of bargaining took place, resulting in approximately 300 hours at the negotiation table. Teachers ratified the contract in mid-December after months of negotiations to solidify a contract that was “fiscally responsible” but addressed teachers’ concerns – mainly class size and caseload, officials said.

Huntley (Jan. 30, *The Daily Herald*) Huntley District 158 closed a forensic audit on Jan. 24 that showed there was no evidence of fraud regarding unauthorized vacation days granted to year-round administrators back in 2004. But the board said it will seek to recover money from the former District 158 superintendent who approved the unauthorized vacation days.

Minooka (Jan. 24, *The Herald News*) The Minooka District 201 superintendent has received word from the state that the district will now be using the foundation formula to calculate its state aid. District 201 could see funds from the state triple as a result. The General State Aid formula contains three different funding calculations: flat grant, alternate and foundation.

Morton (Jan. 23, *Journal Star*, Peoria) Morton District 709 high school students involved in extracurricular activities will be subject to random drug testing beginning next school year. That will happen under drug testing policy, drafted by district and high school administrators, that was approved by the school board

at its Feb. 5 meeting. Students will be tested throughout their four years in high school. If they decline, they will have to sit out extracurricular activities for one year.

Naperville (Jan. 24, *The Daily Herald*) Naperville CUSD 203 students who speak limited English won’t be able to take an adapted test as in past years, and while the state is making some accommodations, help won’t be available to all. English Language Learner students can no longer take the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) test, which uses more simplistic language, shorter sentences and visuals. District 203, like most districts, will likely administer glossaries to as many students as possible, leaving some students out of language accommodations. But it was either that or to not provide assistance to anyone in an effort to keep things equal for all.

Peoria (Jan. 25, *Journal Star*, Peoria) Peoria’s public building commission is set to begin weighing a Peoria District 150 school spending plan request for \$72 million to pay for most of the district’s envisioned projects. Still, “we’re at a very early stage” in considering the district’s request, said a building commission member after the group met on Jan. 24. Public building commissions across the state, which lost their state-granted authority to bond for public school construction after 1993 but saw it reinstated in 2006, can borrow up to 5 percent of the assessed value of their cities’ or jurisdictions’ property. In Peoria, that amounts to \$74 million.

Somonauk (Jan. 25, *The Times*, Ottawa) The Somonauk CUSD 432 school board has initiated the process of withdrawing from the DeKalb County Special Education Association, which was formed to provide special education services for small school districts.

Speakers named for NSBA confab in Orlando, March 29-April 1

The National School Boards Association's 68th Annual Conference this year in Orlando, Florida, Mar. 29 – April 1, will feature a fresh lineup of speakers, sessions and special networking events, according to event organizers.

One highlight for Illinois school leaders will be the Illinois Reception, to be held from 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday, March 28, in room Florida III, The Peabody Hotel, 9801 International Drive, Orlando.

Conference planners say that whether you are a new board member or a veteran, a board support professional or a superintendent, you might just go home with the tools you need to tackle and manage important issues in your school district.

NSBA again offers topical program tracks to make it easier to identify the programs most relevant to board members and other school leaders. For 2008, NSBA is reviving a new "Hot Topics" mini-tracks series to provide information on issues most requested by school board members.

Some programming is designed specifically for new board members, superintendents, board support professionals, and more. The "Focus on Education Lectures" will offer information about timely issues that can affect any school district's future.

Attendees can start planning their conference schedule now. An online

planner allows those who want to attend to search workshops, sessions, events, and vendors by name, subject area, and date/time to create their own individualized schedule. The planner is available online at: <http://www.nsba2.org/acccg2008/>.

General session speakers

There is valuable Conference programming at every turn, including four high-profile and motivational general session speakers. This year's general session speakers include:

- Former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor
- Actor Sidney Poitier
- TV journalist Jim Lehrer
- Humorist Garrison Keillor

NSBA will also offer programs for board members from urban as well as rural districts, members with an interest in technology, and school attorneys, and guests of attendees. Plus there's an Executive Job Fair, an Exhibition of School Architecture, and more, along with a golf tournament and 5K Run/Walk.

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

IASA conference to host Apple tech lab, speakers Ash, November

The Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) Annual Conference, which is set for April 23-25 in Springfield, will feature guest speakers ranging from humorist and former superintendent Bob Ash to futurist and technological visionary Alan November.

Attendees will include school superintendents, assistant superintendents, state agency staff and college professors of educational administration. Among the draws this year will be an Apple education computer lab, and an open house and building dedication for the new IASA office building.

Organizers say this year's event is an excellent opportunity to establish new contacts, network with colleagues, and meet the IASA staff and board of directors. General sessions and breakout panels are designed to provide up-to-date information on topics relevant to superintendents and other administrators. The exhibit hall, which is open for two days, gives attendees access to more than 60 vendors, providing an excellent opportunity to get a quick look at the latest products and services available to Illinois school districts.

This year's conference will be held at the Hilton Hotel and the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center in downtown Springfield; however, starting next year, the conference will be held at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on the city's south side. Future dates for the event are set for:

- April 1-3, 2009
- April 14-16, 2010
- April 13-15, 2011
- April 18-20, 2012

Questions on the conference can be directed to Cherry L. Middleton, IASA executive secretary/office coordinator, phone 217/787-9306; or email cmiddleton@iasaedu.org.

MISCONDUCT *from page 6*

into allegations of teacher misconduct. Only one state is slower than Illinois in the pace at which it revokes or suspends misbehaving teachers' certificates.

The state's biggest teacher organization, the Illinois Education Association, has already endorsed the idea of permitting the state to hire teacher misconduct investigators. The IEA is said to be negotiating with ISBE to work out an acceptable procedure for

such investigations.

Illinois Association of School Boards' Executive Director Michael D. Johnson says the organization is concerned that adding this responsibility might deflect ISBE resources from the state agency's core function, overseeing the education of children.

"But we are certainly committed to working with the legislature and the state board to develop a workable system."

IASB spring dinner plans include discussions on hot issues of interest

Discussion sessions at IASB division dinner meetings this spring – concluding on April 29 – include helpful discussions on many current issues of interest to school board members.

The sessions will focus on sharing information about the issues that concern the participants. IASB's Western Division spring meeting on March 18, for example, will be led by



David Messersmith

David Messersmith, Superintendent, **Bushnell-Prairie City CUSD 170**. Messersmith will kick off a “hot topics” discussion and then the topics will be left up to the roundtable participants.

“These programs may be very valuable to school board members,” said IASB Field Services Senior Director Doug Blair. He notes that such “hot issue” discussions are being held at more than one spring division meeting this year.

These panel sessions are free for school leaders, but all participants are invited for dinner, for which they must be registered and pay the charge. Discussions also will be led by veteran lobbyists and IASB Field Services directors.

Other spring division meeting discussions will cover the latest information from the Illinois Capitol on school consolidation, funding reform plans, the junk food ban, and other breaking legislative issues.

But hot topics and legislative matters aren't the only items on the itinerary. A topic at the Blackhawk Division's spring dinner meeting on March 12, for example, is “County Sales Tax for School Facilities,” presented by Jay Morrow, Superintendent, **United THSD 30**, Rock Island, and Mike Oberhaus, Associate Superintendent for Operations and Quality, **Rock Island SD 41**.

The presenters believe school facility funds are always in short supply for

needed building repairs. But they say a new law promises to provide these much-sought-after funds through a voter-approved countywide sales tax earmarked to fund school facilities. The presentation led by Morrow and Oberhaus will focus on basic information about the new county sales tax law and what it might mean for any school facility.

But hot topics and legislative matters aren't the only items on the itinerary. A topic at the Blackhawk Division's spring dinner meeting on March 12, for example, is “County Sales Tax for School Facilities,”...

They will also facilitate a discussion on this valuable new approach to school facility funding during the Blackhawk Division dinner meeting at Kewanee High School's Petersen Auditorium. Attendees at that particular IASB spring division meeting will have two other topics to choose from: “Building a Green School,” led by Janice Spears, Educational Consultant and former superintendent of **CUSD 3, Fulton County, Cuba**; and “Response-to-Intervention: Planning for Implementation,” a discussion led by Hector Lareau, attorney, Moline.

Because all three breakout sessions will be held simultaneously from 7:45 to 9 p.m., anyone who wishes to learn from two or more of the sessions would need to make plans to arrange attendance with others at separate sessions and share notes with one or more colleagues.

For more information on these division meetings and many others planned for the spring, watch for your IASB division meeting mailings or visit the IASB Web site at www.iasb.com/calendar/.

NEWS FROM IASB

Conference photos available now for viewing and reprints

Photos of the 2007 Joint Annual Conference are now available through a secured third-party Web site. There is no fee, but visitors will need a password to log into the site.

To access the gallery, type in your email, event name and password. The event name is *iasb4*. The password is *chicago*. The web site address is: <http://momentshare.com/levyphoto/>.

Those who wish can order prints. They will be available in any size, from wallets to 11 by 14 inches. Costs range from \$1.50 to \$14.50.

Nominations sought for annual IASB awards

Nominations are now being sought for award recognition through the Harold P. Seamon Award for Distinguished Service to public education. The activity to be recognized should extend statewide or have an impact on a large region. Only one such award may be given annually. The nomination deadline is April 15.

Outstanding nominees are sought from all walks of life. IASB will present the award at the 2008 Joint Annual Conference in November.

The Association also offers IASB Honorary Memberships for Exceptional Service in recognition of distinguished service to IASB or to public education. Contributions may be district-wide or regional. Up to three awards may be given each year at regional meetings.

Submit a brief letter of nomination for either award by April 15 to the IASB awards committee liaison. IASB staff and current board members and are not eligible recipients.

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.

Somogyi, Doyle earn Fellows honor in IASB board LeaderShop Academy

Barbara Somogyi, board president, Elk Grove CCSD 59, and Sean William Doyle, board president, Summit Hill SD 161, have become IASB's third and fourth School Board LeaderShop Academy fellows. They achieved this rare designation by fulfilling the requirements of participating in seven LeaderShop core workshops and five elective courses.

Somogyi has been a member of the Elk Grove CCSD 59 Board of Education since 1981. Doyle was elected to the Summit Hill SD 161 Board of Education in 2003.

Somogyi and Doyle were each awarded a special plaque at IASB's Metro Divisions' Rally for Public Education on Feb. 27, and they are being asked to serve in an advisory capacity to IASB around effective governance issues.

They join Dale Hansen, board president, **Grant Park CUSD 6**, and the late Eugene Wroblewski, board president, **Argo CHSD 217** — who was the first Academy Fellow back in 2005 (he passed away Feb. 11) — as recipients of this important recognition.

Somogyi and Hansen also serve on the Illinois Association of School Boards' Board of Directors. Somogyi is Director of the North Cook Division, while Hansen is Director of the Three Rivers Division.

The *School Board LeaderShop* Academy promotes and recognizes board members' continuous learning and professional development.

Some programs are offered every other year to accommodate board turnover following the biennial election. Other programs are offered every year.

As board members work their way through the *School Board LeaderShop* curriculum, they earn and maintain membership in the Academy. The rules for earning and maintaining membership are as follows:

1. Admission to Academy membership requires completion of three

School Board LeaderShop programs:

- a. At least two of these must be from the core curriculum and one of those must be the district governance overview
 - b. The third program may be either a core or an elective offering
2. Academy membership is maintained by completing at least one additional program (either core or elective) over a two-year period.
 3. Upon the completion of seven core and five elective programs, members will be recognized as Academy Fellows.
 4. The Member Emeritus designation is for those board members who retire from or leave their boards while maintaining a Fellowship designation.

Academy members are recognized for their commitment to continuous learning in various ways:

- Academy members receive a LeaderShop Academy pen upon admission to the Academy;
- Academy Fellows receive a plaque recognizing their achievement and are invited to serve in advisory and/or mentoring positions around effective governance issues;
- The names of Members Emeritus are displayed on a permanent honor roll displayed at IASB and they are offered a lifelong subscription to IASB publications.

Additionally, all Academy members have the opportunity to attend a special bi-annual Academy Symposium designed especially for them. This event, now held in even-numbered years, is next scheduled to be held on June 21, at The Westin, Lombard, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

To learn more about IASB board training, including upcoming events and available resources and materials, visit the Web site at: <http://www.iasb.com/training/>.

Privacy law (FERPA) gives parents access to kid's school records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is discussed in the school law column on the next page. What exactly is FERPA? The following explanation is taken from the U.S. Department of Education's Website.

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that affords parents the right to have access to their children's education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records. When a student turns 18 years old, or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, the rights under FERPA transfer from the parents to the student ("eligible student"). The FERPA statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and the FERPA regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

Educational agencies and institutions are required to notify parents and eligible students about their rights under FERPA. Section 99.7 of the FERPA regulations sets forth the requirements for the notification and there is a model notification on a federal Web site at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ppra/modelnotification.html>. Schools do not have to individually notify parents and eligible students but do have to notify them by any means that are reasonably likely to inform the parents or eligible students of their rights.

Under very few circumstances may a school disclose information from education records without consent. But there are several exceptions to FERPA's general prior consent rule that are set forth in the statute and the regulations. See § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. One exception, for example, is the disclosure of "directory information," if the school follows certain procedures set forth in FERPA. (34 CFR § 99.31(a)(11).)

How much can school leaders say to law enforcement?



Melinda Selbee is IASB's general counsel

DEVELOPMENTS IN SCHOOL LAW

Confusion continues to surround the permissible scope of school cooperation with law enforcement. School officials cringe at headlines about school violence and look to law enforcement for help avoiding such incidents. However, state and federal laws grant students privacy rights that leave school officials asking, how much can we say?

This article contains excerpts from the U.S. Department of Education's new brochure on "Balancing Student Privacy and School Safety: A Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act for Elementary and Secondary Schools." The brochure references the federal law governing student records, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). I inserted notes in brackets referring to the Illinois School Student Records Act.

Health or safety emergency

In an emergency, *FERPA* permits school officials to disclose without consent education records, including personally identifiable information from those records, to protect the health or safety of students or other individuals. At such times, records and information may be released to appropriate parties such as law enforcement officials, public health officials, and trained medical personnel. [State statute and ISBE rule provide for the emergency release of information without consent "if the knowledge of such information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other persons."]

Law enforcement unit records

Many school districts employ secu-

rity staff to monitor safety and security in and around schools. Some schools employ off-duty police officers as school security officers, while others designate a particular school official to be responsible for referring potential or alleged violations of law to local police authorities. Under *FERPA*, investigative reports and other records created and maintained by these "law enforcement units" are not considered "education records" subject to *FERPA*. Accordingly, schools may disclose information from law enforcement unit records to anyone, including outside law enforcement authorities, without parental consent. [The state definition of "school student record" excludes information maintained by law enforcement professionals working in the school. In addition, state law requires districts to implement a reciprocal reporting system with local law enforcement agencies regarding criminal offenses committed by students.]

Use of security videos

Schools are increasingly using security cameras as a tool to monitor and improve student safety. Images of students captured on security videotapes that are maintained by the school's law enforcement unit are not considered education records under *FERPA*. Accordingly, these videotapes may be shared with parents of students whose images are on the video and with outside law enforcement authorities, as appropriate. Schools that do not have a designated law enforcement unit might consider designating an employee to serve as the "law enforcement unit" in order to maintain the security camera and determine the appropriate circumstances in which the school would disclose recorded images.

Personal knowledge or observation

FERPA does not prohibit a school official from disclosing information about a student if the information is obtained through the school official's personal knowledge or observation, and not from the student's education records. For example, if a teacher overhears a student making threatening remarks to other students, *FERPA* does not protect that information, and the teacher may disclose what he or she overheard to appropriate authorities. [The state law definition of "school student record" does not include non-recorded information, e.g., observations. It also exempts recorded information maintained by a school employee for his or her exclusive use.]

You can find the complete brochure at <http://www.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/brochures/elsec.html>. In addition, refer to your board policies and administrative procedures on student records. IASB sample policies include 7:340, *Student Records*; 7:340-AP, *Administrative Procedure - Student Records*; 7:190-AP3, *Administrative Procedure - Guidelines for Reciprocal Reporting of Criminal Offenses Committed by Students*.



"I can never find my cell phone in time to answer."

Lt. Gov. survey of school leaders uncovers prevalent concern on ISBE finance services

Results of the 2007 Illinois Lieutenant Governor's survey, containing school leaders' opinions on state education services to schools, indicate there is general satisfaction with most ISBE services, except "finance" services.

Overall, 36 percent of responding school board presidents said ISBE needs improvement in the area of such services, with the lowest ranking being reserved for the timeliness of providing funding to schools; 42.1 percent of board presidents said this needs improvement. The numbers are relatively unchanged from the previous year's survey.

The Illinois Association of School Boards played a role in the survey by distributing it to board presidents of all member school districts. This "Survey of Illinois School Districts" is an annual inquiry conducted by the lieutenant governor's office in order to receive feedback on the need for and quality of the services of the Illinois State Board of Education and the Regional Offices of Education.

The idea originated with the state legislature under terms of a state law (105 ILCS 5/2-3.112).

In August 2007 every school board president in Illinois received the annual service evaluation survey forms. The

2007 survey found the majority of respondents expressing satisfaction with ISBE and ROE at rates nearly identical to the 2006 survey responses. As in the previous year, ISBE's best marks were in the area of communications, while ROEs best marks were for advisory functions.

Of the 869 surveys sent to school board presidents, a total of 338 were returned (177 ISBE surveys and 161 ROE surveys.)

The survey results showed that ISBE's Web site is more than twice as popular as the ROEs' Web site. Thirty-six percent of respondents visited the ISBE Web site on a weekly basis, compared with 15 percent who visited the ROE site.

As to a service evaluation of ISBE, the overall rating was 70.6 percent satisfactory; 10 percent saw a need for improvement; and 19.4 percent rated ISBE services as excellent. ISBE ratings increased favorably from the previous year.

Again, ISBE's best marks were for communications. Specifically, the highest percentage mark from respondents was for the Superintendent's Bulletin, with 40.4 percent rating it as excellent.

For more information on the survey results, visit: <http://www.standinupforillinois.org/find/pubs.php>.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 10 – Starved Rock Legislative Dinner, Celebrations 150, Utica, 6:30 p.m. – Dinner

March 12 – Blackhawk Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Kewanee High School Petersen Auditorium, Kewanee CUSD 229, 6 p.m. – Dinner

March 15 – 13th Annual IASB Job Fair for Teachers, Administrators and Education Majors, St. Xavier University, Chicago, 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

March 18 – Western Division Spring Dinner Meeting, CUSD 3 Fulton Co. Middle-High School, Cuba, 6 p.m. – Dinner

March 29 to April 1 – National School Boards Association Annual Conference, Orlando, FL,

April 22 – Illini Division Summer Governing Meeting, Tuscan Restaurant, Tuscola, 6 p.m.

April 23 to 25 – IASA Annual Conference, Springfield - Hilton and Renaissance Hotels

April 29 – Combined South & West Cook Spring Division Dinner Meeting, Double Tree, Alsip, 6:30 p.m.

April 29 – Wabash Valley Division Summer Governing Meeting, Trace Inn, Sumner (Red Hill State Park), 6 p.m.



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