

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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State Board of Education raises ISAT performance levels

Change holds some danger for schools

The Illinois State Board of Education raised the performance levels of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) for elementary and middle school students during its Jan. 24 meeting in Springfield. The new expectations for student performance will align with the more rigorous Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts, according to ISBE.

“The board today took a significant step in changing how we measure a student’s progress,” said State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch. “The lower expecta-

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tions of the previous performance levels did our students a disservice by not adequately assessing their ability to succeed after high school.

The change means, however, that higher scores will be needed for a student to exceed standards, or meet standards on the ISAT exam.

“Students will have to answer more questions correctly to meet standards,” Susan Sarfaty, superintendent of St. Clair County Regional Office of Education, told the *Belleville News-Democrat* before the vote (“Illinois State Board of Education to consider

raising ISAT performance levels,” Jan. 23, 2013.) “We are anticipating there will be a drop in the number of students who meet and exceed standards.”



Roger Eddy

IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy sees some danger there for schools. “This change could make it appear as if the students in their school are performing worse than they were previously when the *fact* is that even if they improve, these new cut scores

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Safety summit produces ideas, renews call for sharing information

Gov. Pat Quinn, school administrators and mental health and public safety experts said that they left a school safety summit on Jan. 22 with a large number of ideas, such as improving mental health resources and urging students to share potential threat information.

“We want to educate all of those who come through the school building, including the students, that being

silent about potential violence is a very dangerous thing,” Quinn said.

Over 50 people gathered at the Illinois Emergency Management Agency in Springfield in response to a call from the governor following December’s Connecticut school shooting.

Quinn described the summit as an early step in an ongoing conversation to find measures that could prevent violent episodes in schools. Quinn

cited existing efforts in communities across the state that could be adopted by other towns. In the suburban Chicago community of Berwyn, the governor said, teachers and school staff receive training regarding violence in the classroom.

“If there are any problems of violence such as bullying, hazing going on, we have to address those. We can-

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Science standards drafted

The second draft of the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), a new set of voluntary, rigorous, internationally benchmarked standards, was recently released for public review. Illinois and 25 other states have worked together to develop the standards, which identify science and engineering practices and content needed by all students, at www.nextgenscience.org.

FY 2014 funding proposal

ISBE approved a Fiscal Year 2014 budget recommendation on Jan. 24 that seeks an \$875 million or 13 percent increase over the current year, just meeting the statutory minimum General State Aid Foundation Level. The plan provides higher funding in line items such as early childhood (up \$40 million) and bilingual education (up \$11 million), plus full funding of most mandated categoricals and an additional \$250 million in capital funding to upgrade technology.

PERA training clarified

State law requires school board members to complete Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) training before participating in certain teacher dismissals. This only applies to board members who plan to participate in the Optional Alternative Evaluative Dismissal (OAED) process, as defined in 105 ILCS 5/24-16.5. The OAED process may not be used until a district's formal PERA implementation date. For most districts in Illinois this is not until 2016. Board members should consult with their districts and/or counsel to determine: a) whether the district plans on using the OAED process; and b) their applicable PERA implementation date. To learn more, contact Vicki Phillips at vphillip@isbe.net or visit <http://iasb.com/law/PERAoverview.pdf>.

Learning climate survey conducted until end of March eyes '5Essentials'

Educators and students across Illinois have an opportunity from now to Mar. 31 to participate in the new "Illinois 5Essentials Survey: Organizing Schools for Improvement." This state learning-climate survey was designed to provide a detailed portrait of the inner workings of each school from an organizational perspective.

All certified teachers, and students in grades 6 through 12, will be asked to participate in the 15-minute survey online at: <https://illinois.5-essentials.org>. Parent participation in the survey is optional at the discretion of the school district. Respondent identities and individual responses will be kept completely confidential, according to state officials at ISBE.

"The State Board has long understood that test scores alone do not offer the full picture of schools and learning," explained State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch. "The Illinois 5Essentials Survey will finally help us paint that fuller picture of learning conditions and guide local and state improvement initiatives so that every student has access to a world-class education."

This survey will allow teachers, students and parents (if the district chooses to include them) to provide feedback on the critical elements of school effectiveness, organizers say.

The survey grew from decades of research at the University of Chicago about what makes a school successful. The work identified five indicators that lead to important student outcomes, including improved attendance and larger test score gains.

The five indicators that positively affect school success, according to state officials, are:

- Collaborative Teachers
- Involved Families
- Supportive Environments
- Ambitious Instruction

Research has proven, survey organizers said, that schools strong on at least three of the essentials are 10 times more likely to improve student outcomes.

The survey will be administered online by UChicago Impact at the University of Chicago, on behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education. The survey results will be sent to school administrators in June and will be made available to the public through a website in the fall, with some survey results included in newly redesigned school report cards released in October.


Many school districts have already begun to prepare for the survey. For those that have not, state officials say the user manual may be a good place to start. It is available online at: http://cdn.e2ma.net/user-data/1716387/assets/docs/UEI_13_XXX_IL_5E_Survey_Manual_final_2.pdf.

Illinois
SCHOOL BOARD
Newsbulletin

**Illinois Association
of School Boards**

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**ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

'Landmark' guidelines detail how sports may work for disabled kids

Lists 'reasonable modification' ideas

In what is being called a landmark determination that could do for students with disabilities what Title IX did for female athletes, the U.S. Department of Education has detailed how schools must ensure that students with disabilities are given equal opportunities to compete in school athletics.

Advocates say the Jan. 25 guidelines from the federal department's Office for Civil Rights give teeth to what had been only a vague policy, newly detailing how schools should do more to provide for and include students with disabilities.

The newly stated guidelines, which cover interscholastic, club and intramural sports at all education levels, stress that schools must make "reasonable modifications" for students with disabilities who are otherwise qualified to play on mainstream teams whenever possible as long as those modifications do not fundamentally alter the way the sport is played.

Disabled students who want to play for their school could join traditional teams if officials can make "reasonable modifications" to accommodate them. If those adjustments would fundamentally alter a sport or give the student an advantage, the department is directing the school to create parallel athletic programs that have comparable standing to traditional programs.

In addition to explaining legal obligations, the guidance urges school districts to work with community organizations to increase athletic opportunities for students with disabilities, such as opportunities outside of the existing extracurricular athletic program.

Students with disabilities have the right, under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, to an equal opportunity to participate in their schools' extracurricular activities. A 2010 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office found that many students with disabilities are not afforded an equal opportunity to participate in athletics, and therefore may not have equitable access to the health and social benefits of athletic participation.

The guidance letter provides examples of the kinds of reasonable modifications that schools may be required to make to existing policies, practices, or procedures for students with intellectual, developmental, physical, or any other type of disability. Examples of such modifications include:

- The allowance of a visual cue alongside a starter pistol to allow a student with a hearing impairment who is fast enough to qualify for the track team the opportunity to compete.
- The waiver of a rule requiring the "two-hand touch" finish in swim events so that a one-armed swimmer with the requisite ability can participate at swim meets.

The guidance also notes that the law does not require that a student with a disability be allowed to participate in any selective or competitive program offered by a school district, so long as the selection or competition criteria are not discriminatory.

"Participation in extracurricular athletics can be a critical part of a student's overall educational experience," said Seth Galanter, acting assistant secretary for the Office for Civil Rights (OCR). "Schools must ensure equal access to that rewarding experience for students with disabilities."

The Illinois High School Association, which oversees most high school athletics in Illinois, notes it already has made strides in providing opportunities for physical activity to students with disabilities. For example the group has created special divisions for participation within several more individualized sports such as track and field, swimming and bowling. The IHSA board voted in September 2012 to allow disabled athletes to participate at some state competitions last fall. Thus the IHSA has athletic standards for disabled students and allows them to compete in state meets.

IASB's liaison to the IHSA, Mark Harms, notes that "the guidelines are just too new to foresee what impact they will have on Illinois schools."

A copy of the letter containing the guidelines is online at: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201301-504.pdf>.

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not look the other way," he said.

Quinn also said he will be looking into whether adequate mental health services are available to educators and students to prevent violence.

"The governor said some of the ideas discussed at the summit may lead to legislation and the topic was likely to come up again in his State of the State speech this month," said IASB Deputy Executive Director Ben

Schwarm, who represented the Association at the meeting, along with IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy.

Schwarm said sharing information between schools and law enforcement author-



Gov. Pat Quinn

ities was a key focus of discussion at the summit, along with the topic of bullying.

LaMar Hasbrouck, the director of the Illinois Department of Public Health, another invited attendee, said school shootings are "just a spillover of societal violence. We have to talk about violence in a more global sense; not just school shooting violence, which happens very, very rarely."

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could make it appear as if the school and students are not performing as well. I liken it to changing the grading scale. For example, if an A used to take 90% this would be like changing it to 94% and so on,” Eddy said.

The implications for this, he said, might be that schools previously making AYP perhaps might not, even when there is measured improvement.

The ISATs, used as part of the state and federal accountability system, assess students in math, reading and science each spring but have not proven to be a strong indicator of college and career readiness. Educators have even observed a disconnect between the higher scores of the ISAT results, at 82 percent of students meeting or exceeding standards statewide last year, and the lower scores of the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) given to all 11th graders, at 51 percent statewide last year.

By raising the “cut” scores, ISBE said it believes that performance outcomes will better align with the more rigorous and robust standards of the Common Core being implemented in schools across the state and provide more accurate information about students’ progress toward success after high school graduation.

“Although this might prepare us for the eventual implementation of Common Core Assessments, in the short run this is going to provide a very unreliable measure of how well our schools are doing as far as improvement is concerned,” Eddy stated.

The higher expectations of the new ISAT cut scores will cause a downward shift in the number of students who meet or exceed standards. ISAT results show 79 percent of all grade 3 through 8 students scored proficient in reading and 86 percent of students scored proficient in mathematics.

When using the new performance levels to analyze the ISAT data col-

lected in spring 2012, the percentage of students who would have met and exceeded standards potentially dropped to 60 percent for both reading and mathematics. This drop would have been a result of raising expectations, not a reflection of student or teacher performance, ISBE officials noted.

Harmony-Emge SD 175 Superintendent Pam Leonard said she anticipates the students meeting and exceeding standards in her school district to be reduced by 20 percent to 25 percent in the wake of the state board’s action in approving the increase in ISAT performance levels.

“It’s going to be a little bit of a sticker shock for everybody,” she told the Belleville newspaper. “This next year will look different, but as we go down the years, it will get better and better as we will be raising those standards.

In the long run, Leonard said, it’s going to be better for the students. “It’s going to give our kids a better position to be competitive in the global market and that is the long-range goal,” she said.

State officials said that performance expectations for the science assessments will remain the same until new science standards are finalized later in 2013. The performance levels of the PSAE, which includes the ACT, also will not change as that test already provides a good indicator of college and career readiness.

The new cut scores also lay the groundwork to replace the ISAT in math and English Language Arts with exams developed by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC), a consortium of 23 states, including Illinois.

The PARCC exam set to debut in the 2014-15 school year and aligned to the Common Core will include a computer-based assessment that ISBE said should yield more timely results and will be given more than once during the school year.

The effort to raise performance expectations is part of an educational reform agenda seen across the United

States. Five states have recently changed their performance levels. Illinois is among 45 states that have formally adopted the Common Core State Standards for college and career readiness.

The Illinois State Board of Education adopted the Common Core in 2010, replacing the Illinois Learning Standards that were developed in 1997. The Common Core standards are said to be higher, fewer and deeper than the previous standards and establish year-by-year guidelines, outlining the skills and content students must master at each grade level to continue along the path to college or training programs to join the workforce.

To learn more about the standards or read them, visit: http://www.isbe.net/common_core/default.htm.



Pam Leonard



Excel awards for 2013 to recognize leadership at banquet this October

The Illinois State Board of Education has a program to recognize outstanding school board members, administrators, staff members, and teachers. “Those Who Excel” is a statewide program that annually recognizes contributions to elementary and secondary education.

Nomination forms for the program can be found online at http://www.isbe.net/pdf/those_who_excel.pdf.

Nominations are due by June 3. The awards will be presented at the 39th annual Those Who Excel banquet on Oct. 19 at the Marriott Hotel and Convention Center in Normal.

Information is available from Ann Muraro-Lacopo, at 217/782-4648 or by e-mail at amuraro@isbe.net.

Countywide sales tax questions set for April 9 vote in 17 counties

As one indication of the tough times schools face financially, school districts in 17 counties are set to place County School Facilities Sales Tax questions on the April 9 ballot.

The April election will mark the eighth time since the law was adopted in October 2007 voters will help decide whether their local districts can tap into alternative funding sources to improve school facilities.

Counties with a countywide sales tax question on the ballot in April are: Boone, Christian, Crawford, Douglas, Fulton, Henry, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Jersey, Marshall, Mercer, Ogle, Randolph, Tazewell, Whiteside, and Woodford.

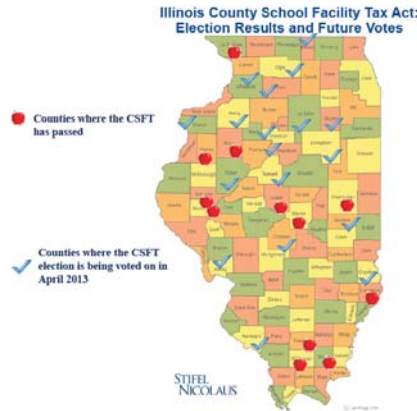
Sometimes called the “Wal-Mart” tax, the county school facilities sales tax referendum, when adopted, imposes an additional 1 percent sales tax on everything that the county taxes. But it does not impose any tax on goods or services that are not already subject to sales taxes.

Goods and services that are not subject to the additional tax include cars, trucks, ATVs, boats and RVs; mobile homes, unprepared food, drugs, farm equipment and parts.

For many school districts, the funding provided by the county school facility sales tax appears to be the best or only way to raise funds for school construction, repair and maintenance.

The state has underfunded new school construction funds since 2003, funding some projects last year after a nine-year hiatus. The sales tax option has become a necessary tool in many counties, according to Jim Burgett, a former Illinois school superintendent who now works for Stifel Nicolaus, an investment bank firm based in St. Louis.

But the tax has been approved in just 12 of 44 county referendums since 2007, Burgett said.



Districts have three options to use the additional tax revenue: to save for future capital projects, to issue new bonds for current capital needs, or to retire existing debt by abating taxes or not levying property taxes for facility projects. School districts can use the funds in any combination of these options.

While not all districts in a given county have to endorse the facilities sales tax referendum to get it on the ballot, all districts do benefit and share the funds.

The referendum qualifies for the ballot when school boards representing more than 50 percent of the resident student enrollment in the county adopt a resolution to certify the question. But timing is also essential, for two reasons, explained Anne Noble, a Stifel Nicolaus senior vice president.

First, it takes about a year for districts to receive any funds because the state revenue department only changes the tax rates for counties twice a year, on Jan. 1 and July 1. Second, it takes about four months after the tax law goes into effect for funds to be distributed from the state to the counties through regional offices of education.

A simple majority of votes cast is needed to approve the referendum.

Results of all referendums will be reported in subsequent issues of this newsletter.

Homage paid to memory of school attorney Anthony G. ‘Tony’ Scariano, 66

Nationally recognized attorney Anthony G. Scariano, Flossmoor, died Dec. 26, 2012. He was 66.

Scariano served as chairman of both the Illinois and the National Council of School Attorneys and in 2011 was awarded the NCSA’s Lifetime Achievement Award.



Anthony G. Scariano

A partner in the firm Scariano, Himes and Petrarca, Chtd., he was a much sought-after speaker on the topic of school law, presenting for IASB as well as for the American Bar Association, National School Boards Association, the Education Law Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the Association of School Business Officials, as well as countless state and local organizations.

Partner Justin Petrarca, a friend and colleague for 40 years, said: “Tony was not only a consummate lawyer but also a ‘teacher’ at his core. He taught all he encountered so much about the meaning of the law, but also about the meaning of life.”

Before beginning his career as a lawyer, he taught elementary and high school students, including at his alma mater, Rich Township High School, in Rich THSD 227, Matteson.



New board member training to meet mandates at 12 events

More than 1,200 new board members may be elected in the April 9 school board elections. That is why IASB has scheduled board training events at 12 regional locations over a two-month period following the election.

The training is designed for new board members as well as for those who need to complete new state mandated training requirements.

Veteran board members who are re-elected to their boards in 2013 are required to complete the four-hour mandatory "Professional Development Leadership Training" within one year of taking the oath of office. The Friday session in each location will fulfill this requirement.

Friday's session will also include the mandatory Open Meetings Act training for newly elected board members and a session on orienting newly seated board members and building the new board team for veteran board members in attendance.

Saturday's session will be focused on assisting newly elected board members and will focus on the roles and responsibilities of board service. Veteran board members and district superintendents are encouraged to attend this second day with their newly elected board members.

The sessions offered are:

Professional Development Leadership Training for School Board Members (PDLT) — this course satisfies the requirements for mandatory board member training per Public Act 097-0008 and includes instruction in education and labor law, financial oversight, accountability and fiduciary responsibilities. Additionally it will fulfill the requirement for Performance Evaluation Reform Act Training for school board members. Every school board member elected or re-elected in 2013 must complete this training within one year of taking the oath of office.

Open Meetings Act Training for School Board Members (OMA) — this course satisfies the requirements for mandatory board member training per Public Act 097-504. The course focuses specifically on the law as it applies to school board meetings and members. Every school board member elected or appointed after Jan. 1, 2012 must complete this training within 90 days of taking the oath.

Starting Right breakout panel for Veteran Board Members — this special break-out session will provide veteran board members tips and suggestions for orienting their new board members to service on their board and to building an effective new gov-

ernance team.

The Basics of Governance Workshop — this workshop focuses participants on board/board member roles and responsibilities, the board's relationship to the community, and what effective school district governance looks like. Participants will also have an opportunity to try out some tools and procedures that make a school board effective.

The one and two-day training events will be held at the following dates and locations:

- May 10-11: Crystal Lake Holiday Inn; Thelma Keller Convention Center & Hotel & Suites, Effingham
- May 17-18: Glen Ellyn Crowne Plaza Lombard, Carbondale Holiday Inn Conference Center
- May 31-June 1: Glenview Wyndham Suites, Normal Marriott Hotel & Conference Center
- June 7-8: Freeport Highland Community College, Collinsville Gateway Center
- June 14-15: Tinley Park Holiday Inn, Springfield Crowne Plaza
- June 21-22: Moline Stoney Creek Inn, Champaign Hilton Garden Inn

Registration will begin in early March. Single-day fees will be \$175 and the two-day boot will be \$325.

Use of website jumps 17 percent, page views reach nearly 1.26 million

The popularity and use of the Association's public website was evident in 2012, as overall usage jumped 17 percent.

IASB maintains three websites: one is an intranet site for internal staff use; another is exclusive for members-only use; and the third is the public domain website. The latter is by far the largest domain and is growing every year, according to the most recent cumulative statistics.

Overall usage is measured by "page views" and that number reached nearly 1.26 million in 2012. That is a 17.9 percent increase over the previous year and is the fourth consecutive year

that page views on the www.iasb.com website topped 1 million.

"These numbers reflect both member and public use," explained James Russell, IASB associate executive director of communications. "The public website is the 'front door' to the Association, where we make material, documents and information available to members and prospective members."

The IASB public website is also widely used by school administrators, secretaries, attorneys, education professors, media, and parents, among others, he added.

Other general statistics for 2012 also reflect increased usage, includ-

ing hits, which were up 39.1 percent; document views, up by 13.4 percent; visits, up by 9.3 percent; and unique visitors, up 2.9 percent.

The home page is the single most accessed page, at 190,967 views. Pages that showed sharp increased traffic were the member directory, which was up by 125.5 percent; board training events, up by 57.7 percent; active executive searches, up by 23.5 percent; and school board elections, up by 23.4 percent.

Russell explained that web traffic is monitored and data compiled monthly to help staff to determine what content and features are needed

NEWS HEADLINES

Algonquin (Jan. 23, *The Daily Herald*) Community Unit District 300 made progress on one of its 2012-13 legislative priorities on the same night it announced them to the public. The Carpentersville-based district outlined its priorities, including truancy and funding, during a reception hosted Jan. 22 in Algonquin. State representatives joined local mayors and more than 100 community members and students for the annual update. On the topic of truancy, the district is pushing all villages in its boundaries to pass ordinances — following in the footsteps of Carpentersville — that make skipping school a ticketable offense.

Chicago (Jan. 11, *Chicago Tribune*) The commission studying school closings in Chicago is recommending that no high schools be shut down because doing so would endanger students by forcing them to cross gang boundaries or move to schools where rival gangs hold sway. “With gang boundaries sometimes shifting on an almost weekly basis, and barring extreme circumstances, it is simply too risky to ask high-school-age kids to cross gang lines just to travel to and from schools,” the Commission on School Utilization wrote in a preliminary report issued Jan. 10. The commission, appointed by Chicago Public Schools chief Barbara Byrd-Bennett to engage the community on the issue of closing schools, won’t issue its final report until early March. The district said it needs to close schools that are under enrolled to deal with a looming \$1 billion deficit. CPS won’t unveil its list of schools to be closed until the end of March,

East St. Louis (Jan. 8, *Belleville News-Democrat*) East St. Louis school leaders are trying to find a way to legally provide buses for students who lost their transportation after an audit. Under state law, bus transportation is only required for students who live

more than a mile and a half from school or who have to negotiate dangerous obstacles on their way to class. The financially strapped district, now under the control of the state, learned through an investigation that more than 1,000 families may have been getting bus service that they shouldn’t have been receiving. Transportation service was cut Jan. 7, causing anger among parents, many of whom told the district they were never notified of the cuts.

Fairview Heights (Jan. 9, *Belleville News-Democrat*) A local school district hopes voters will pass a tax increase in April to help it keep educating children. A referendum on the ballot will ask them to approve a tax increase that will directly pay for the schools. The district is asking for a tax increase that equals an estimated \$99 a year, or about \$8.25 a month, for the owner of a \$100,000 home to keep Grant Middle and Illini Elementary schools open. Grant School District 110 in Fairview Heights has cut its budget by \$983,808 since the 2009-2010 budget year and eliminated many educational programs to keep the district afloat. Falling real estate values means fewer tax dollars and cuts in both state and federal education money forced the district to cut all but the basics.

Litchfield (Jan. 9, *The State Journal-Register*) Members of the Litchfield teachers organization approved a two-year contract agreement on Jan. 8, a day before they were planning to strike. Board and union representatives reached a tentative deal during last-ditch negotiations that ran about four hours. Teachers will receive raises this year for one added year of service, and those not eligible for the so-called “step increase” will have \$500 added to their base salaries. The raises are retroactive to the start of the school year. Teachers will receive a 1 percent across-the-board increase

in their salary schedule next year. School Superintendent Chad Allison said the district could not afford the 3 percent across-the-board raise that teachers originally requested.

Naperville (Jan. 8, *The Daily Herald*) Half of Naperville CUSD 203’s 14 elementary schools will offer all-day kindergarten beginning next school year. Board members voted 6-1 Jan. 7 to approve the program at its seven Title 1 schools beginning in August. The plan aims to offer the full-day kindergarten in all elementary schools as early as 2014. Administrators said it is designed to help jump-start schools with larger at-risk populations while continuing to study the costs and logistics of implementing it districtwide. Administrators think the program will give kindergarten students more time to interact with peers and a better educational foundation. Not everyone shares that view, however, as opponents fear the phased-in attempt leaves too many “what-ifs” in future and does not guarantee the program will be expanded. The costs also cause concern. Startup costs for the program this year are projected to be about \$380,000 while total costs in 2013-14 would be about \$928,000. To implement the program in all schools would cost the district about \$1.3 million after about \$820,000 in payouts from the state.

Rock Island (Jan. 23, *Quad-Cities Times*) Rock Island High School’s new before-school enrichment period has led to a rise in students grades after 13,096 student-teacher contacts were initiated during the first semester. So said a Jan. 22 report to school board members. The enrichment program that began this fall operates from 7:45 a.m. to 8:25 a.m. four days a week, letting students visit multiple teachers for help. Students failing classes are required to attend mandatory sessions for extra help from teachers.

Illinois well represented at Federal Relations Network event

The Federal Relations Network (FRN) conference included nine school board members and a district superintendent from Illinois, including board members: Carolyne Brooks (IASB President, West Richland CUSD 2, Noble), Karen Fisher (Vice President, Ottawa THSD 140), Joe Alesandrini (Past President, Pekin CHSD 303), Bill Andersen (Lake Forest SD 67), Pelleg Graupe (Aptakisic-Tripp CCSD 102, Buffalo Grove), John Jekot (East Maine SD 63, Des Plaines), Mike Kelly (Plainfield CCSD 202), Greg Nichols (Plainfield CCSD 202), and Nicki Snoblin (Lake Forest CHSD 115). Also attending was Superintendent Michael Simeck (Lake Forest SD 67), along with IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy, along with Susan Hilton, IASB director of governmental relations.

The FRN delegates visited their congressional offices Jan. 29 to discuss reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB), protecting funding for Title I and IDEA, especially with the possibility of sequestration, and main-



IASB's top officers led a delegation from Illinois at NSBA's Federal Relations Network Conference, lobbying to prevent planned federal budget cuts. Delegates included Past President Joseph Alesandrini, left; President Carolyne Brooks; and Vice President Karen Fisher, right.

taining local control. The Illinois FRN delegates met with staff of members of Congress, including Representatives Bustos, R. Davis, Foster, Schakowsky, Schneider, Schock, Shimkus, and Kinzinger. They also met with staff from the offices of Senators Mark Kirk and Dick Durbin.

All agreed ESEA must be reauthorized as soon as possible, but very few think it will happen this year. The FRN delegates expressed to legislators that the sooner the federal government reauthorizes ESEA the sooner school districts can focus resources towards more permanent regulations.

NSBA to feature IASB staff presentations, plus top-notch speakers, Illinois reception

The National School Boards Association's 73rd Annual Conference to be held April 13-15 in San Diego will focus on key issues impacting school boards. Included are sessions on what school leaders can do to find their way through tragedy or disaster.

Sponsors say attendees will get a national perspective from top-notch speakers, receive updates on federal legislation, and get legal news.

Among IASB participants will be Executive Director Roger Eddy; Deputy Executive Director Ben Schwarm; Director of Meetings Management Patricia Culler; Director of Meetings Management Designee Carla Bolt; Associate Executive Director Cathy

Talbert; Director of Governmental Relations Susan Hilton, and Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director Carrie Cloyd.

Angie Peifer, associate executive director of board development; and Sandra Kwasa, director of board development, will present a panel on Data-Driven Decision Making.

Kwasa and Nesa Brauer, a consultant on board development, will offer a pre-conference, half-day workshop on Using Data for Continuous School Improvement.

Steve Clark, a consultant on Targeting Achievement through Governance, will be assisting with a session on ethics.

Jeffery Cohn, director of field serv-

ices, will discuss transitioning to the Common Core Standards.

IASB Vice President Karen Fisher, and Policy Services Consultants Nancy Bohl and Brian Zumpf, will be presenting a panel on Policy 101.

At the NSBA Delegate Assembly delegates will be: President Carolyne Brooks, Vice President Karen Fisher, Immediate Past President Joe Alesandrini, and Chicago District 299 Director IASB Jesse Ruiz.

An Illinois Reception is scheduled from 6 to 8 p.m. on Friday, April 12 at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront Hotel. All Illinois attendees, their family/guest are invited to participate.

Visit <http://annualconference.nsba.org/home/>.



“Share the Success” panels such as this one at the 2012 conference are a big part of every Joint Annual Conference.

District proposals being sought for 2013 Joint Annual Conference panels

Feb. 15 was the deadline for school districts to submit “Share the Success” panel proposals to IASB for presentation at the 2013 Joint Annual Conference.

A committee of Association members invited from all over the state will meet March 1 to evaluate all the proposals. Districts that submitted proposals will find out by the middle of April if they are accepted.

Proposals were made electronically. Panel suggestions were submitted by filling out forms online in any of the following categories: governance/leadership; finance and funding; current issues; community relations and communications; school law; facilities/transportation/technology; best practices; or governmental relations.

The 90-minute panel sessions — presented by the board members, administrators and other school or community members who were involved in the particular programs showcased — are based on actual school system experiences. Presenters give insight and practical information on how to solve common problems, share discoveries and innovations from programs succeeding in their school districts, and give tips on how school boards can achieve such successes in their own school districts.

Each proposal submitted will be evaluated using the following points of consideration:

- Is the topic of high interest and relevance to today’s leaders?

- Does the description give a clear, concise picture of what the presentation will include?
- Are the objectives of the proposed presentation clear and can they be met realistically in a 90-minute session?
- Is there evidence that the presentation will address the appropriate role of the board relative to the topic?
- Is there evidence of creativity and innovation in the approach taken to this issue or topic?

The actual selection criteria for proposals are as follows:

- Is specific information, rather than vague generalization, provided?
- Is the program’s purported success supported by positive results?
- Will the presentation provide solid, practical, “how to” information (and be more than just a public relations or marketing effort for the school district or organization)?
- Can the school district’s experience be replicated by other school systems?
- Is the proposal well-written, i.e., does it demonstrate correct spelling and grammar usage?
- Does the proposal have the potential to attract and stimulate conference attendees?

The chosen panels will be presented at the Joint Annual Conference, which is set for Nov. 22-24 in Chicago.

NEWS FROM IASB

Conference papers online

Handouts from 49 of the panels presented at the 2012 Joint Annual Conference are still available to view and download from IASB’s Members-Only website. Handouts will be available through Sep. 1 and can be accessed by logging into the IASB Members-Only website at: <http://members.iasb.com>. For more information on the Members-Only website, please see: <http://www.iasb.com/press/memonly.cfm>. Handouts have been downloaded 3,645 times since November.

Recent court decisions

Summaries of recent court decisions of interest to Illinois school districts are being maintained and regularly updated, written by IASB Office of General Counsel members and their law clerks and summer legal externs. The decisions can be found at: <http://www.iasb.com/law/courtdecisions.cfm>.

Periodical indexes

IASB offers online indexes for two Association periodicals issued through 2012, namely *The Illinois School Board Journal*, and *Illinois School Board Newsbulletin*. The Journal can be searched through either of two indexes: by subject and by author.

Indexes for both publications also are available for 2009, 2010 and 2011, and available on the IASB website at <http://www.iasb.com/publications.cfm>

Law brief filed

A court case in which IASB filed an Amici brief, *Griggsville-Perry Federation of Support Personnel IFT-AFT, Local #4141 v. Griggsville-Perry Community Unit School Dist.* was recently argued before the Ill. Supreme Court. It dealt with upholding at-will employment terms.

IASB conducts survey of members, aims to obtain better picture of needs

Every five years, IASB polls its membership to gain insight into what board members and superintendents think and value. In addition to collecting important demographic information, this comprehensive survey is used to determine who is using IASB services, what they think about them, and how the Association can change to better meet member needs. The survey, which was also conducted in 1998, 2003 and 2008, will be initiated on March 1. Board members and superintendents will be given a month to complete it.

Unlike previous years when only mailed, printed surveys were used, the 2013 survey will be offered in both online and print formats. Initially, all members will be directed to the online survey. Those who cannot access it electronically will be able to request a printed, postage-paid copy.

Like previous surveys, this year's poll will be quite long – up to 150 questions – and will take about 30-45 minutes to complete. Members are encouraged to complete the entire survey at one sitting; however, they will be able to leave and return to it if need be. The third party survey website will not “time out” or eliminate partially completed surveys.

Many of the same questions are posed to both board members and superintendents. Some questions; however, will be distinct to the specific tasks of the position. Categories for the 2013 board member survey:

- About your district

- About you
- About your family
- Your use of the Internet and social media
- About your school board service
- About your school board
- Reducing school board turnover
- About your superintendent
- About school improvement
- The future of education
- School board member training
- Evaluation of IASB workshops, services
- Evaluation of IASB publications, programs
- Contacting IASB staff

Questions to superintendents are also separated by similar categories. The format is multiple choice, which enables faster answers.

IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy said that the survey provides an invaluable resource to the Association. “We obviously don’t intend this to be a mandatory event. But we do want our members to know that their response rate is important to the validity of the survey,” he said. “I personally want to thank our members ahead of time for participating.”

All answers are confidential and no lists or addresses will be collected or shared with any individuals or organizations. Results of the survey will be shared after they are tabulated. Previous surveys can be found online at: <http://www.iasb.com/services/surveymenu.cfm>.

Association looking to sublease four furnished office spaces on fifth floor of its Lombard suite

IASB's Lombard office currently has four office spaces available for immediate occupancy. The Association is marketing the space, which is part of its fifth floor operations. The completely furnished offices include all amenities: utilities, Internet and access to phone, office machines,

kitchen, and conference room.

The building where the offices are located is close to I-355 and I-88. A two- to five-year agreement is sought. Interested parties should contact Melinda Selbee at 630/705-3568, for details and to make an appointment to view the facility.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

February 22-23 – Data First Boot-camp, IASB Springfield

February 23 – Data First – Modules 2, 3 and 4, IASB Springfield

February 26 – Abe Lincoln Division Dinner Meeting, Warrensburg-Latham CUSD 11

February 26 – Shawnee Division Dinner Meeting, Harrisburg CUSD 3

February 27 – Egyptian Division Dinner Meeting, Benton CCSD 47

February 27 – Southwestern Division Dinner Meeting, Belle Valley SD 119, Belleville

February 28 – Blackhawk Division Dinner Meeting, United THSD 30, East Moline

February 28 – Illini Division Dinner Meeting, Charleston CUSD 1

March 5 – Wabash Valley Division Dinner Meeting, West Richland CUSD 1, Noble

March 5 – West Cook Division Dinner Meeting, The Elmcrest, Elmwood Park

March 5 – DuPage Division Dinner Meeting, Bensenville SD 2

March 5 – Western Division Dinner Meeting, West Prairie SD 103, Sciota

March 6 – Kaskasia Division Dinner Meeting, Gillespie CUSD 7

March 6 – Central Illinois Valley Division Dinner Meeting, Dunlap CUSD 323

March 7 – Corn Belt Division Dinner Meeting, Lexington CUSD 7

March 7 – Three Rivers Division Dinner Meeting, The Renaissance, Joliet

March 12 – Two Rivers Division Dinner Meeting, Western CUSD 12, Barry

March 13 – Lake Division Dinner Meeting, Aptakisic-Tripp CCSD 102, Buffalo Grove

March 14 – Starved Rock Division Dinner Meeting, Celebrations 150, Utica