

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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Bush budget cuts \$13 million from Illinois schools

Proposal would wipe out funding for vocational training

President George W. Bush's Fiscal Year 2006 budget would slash \$13 million in federal funding for Illinois schools, with deep cuts to vocational and technical education programs that would impact nearly 60 percent of Illinois students. Bush is proposing to cut the overall budget of the U.S. Department of Education by .9 percent.

While launching a new high school initiative, the president has proposed ending 48 existing education programs, with cuts in vocational and technical education, education technology, arts education, and state grants under the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities program.

Bush's \$56 billion proposed FY 2006 budget eliminates \$1.3 billion in Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act funding, in the form of grants and loans. And if Perkins money is eliminated, state money will likely go, too.

Although many studies disagree with the finding, a White House Office of Management and Budget review indicated that the program "produced

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little or no evidence of improved outcomes for students."

Other budget cuts would eliminate \$437 million in Safe and Drug-Free Schools grants, which fund local school social work positions, bullying prevention programs, alcohol and drug education materials, and training.

A spokesman said the move would shift dollars to the president's high school initiative and allow states to use money wherever it's needed most, rather than tying it strictly to vocational education or other programs.

Bush has said the Perkins money will instead be put into a block grant intended to improve high school education. Schools could potentially use



Vocational and technical coursework, such as this electrical systems laboratory work, is one place where students can apply and develop the math skills they learn in math classes, educators say.

the money for vocational education, but some educators are skeptical they would do so.

"Whenever you hear the words 'block grant,' think 'cut,'" said a former "vo-tech" center director in Springfield. "If schools are given a choice,

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Governor's budget 'slap' at funding reform

Governor Rod Blagojevich has called for only \$140 million in new elementary and secondary education spending this year, significantly less than in the past two years. The small increase in his budget released on Feb. 16, and his vow

not to change the education funding formula, put Blagojevich at odds with his strongest legislative ally, Sen. President Emil Jones, Jr. (D-Chicago).

Jones — a key ally in adopting

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New techniques expand board access, input

The Illinois State Board of Education is trying to determine how best to provide public access via real-time technology for the various meetings they conduct (the board and its committees, and the state teacher certification board). ISBE phone records report heavy use of the "listen only" phone line for meetings. ISBE also offers a live Internet audio broadcast of board meetings and some committee meetings.

The state board has also expanded its committee meetings to include public participation at the start of each meeting, according to IASB liaison Cynthia S. Woods.

ISBE approves state budget allocation plan

The Illinois State Board of Education has made specific recommendations for allocating the governor's proposed \$140 million funding increase for elementary and secondary education in Fiscal Year (FY) 2006.

Increasing the foundation funding level is the board's number one priority. The board also placed a high priority on increasing funding for high-quality preschool, suggesting a \$30 million increase. The board also recommended an \$80 million increase to General State Aid, resulting in a \$40 to \$45 per pupil increase, and a \$30 million increase to Early Childhood Education, along with a \$20 million increase to Mandated Categorical Funds.

ISBE sets Excel banquet date and location

ISBE's Those Who Excel banquet this year will be held Saturday, April 16, at the Holiday Inn Select in Decatur.

Preschooling ordered for undocumented immigrants

The state board approved a rule amendment on Feb. 17 that will prohibit Illinois public schools from denying services to children because they lack documentation of immigration status or legal presence in the country.

"We took this action because no student should be denied access to high-quality preschool based on his or her immigrant status," said State Board Chairman Jesse Ruiz. "The governor called for this action, and the board unanimously agreed that it is the right thing to do."

The regulation impacts all public school programs. It means no program for children funded by a grant from ISBE may discriminate based on immigration status. This provision will be incorporated into all ISBE grant agreements. The rule change now goes to the legislature's Joint Committee on Administrative Rules.

The change was prompted by a case in Will County, where officials were accused of turning away a 4-year-old girl from the preschool program last fall because she was an undocumented immigrant. Preschool programs are considered vital for most disadvantaged children to succeed in school.

Illinois already had a regulation that prohibited schools from denying enrollment to children based on immigration status. But the wording did not clearly apply to preschool age children, said Becky Watts, spokeswoman for ISBE.

This situation led to a proposal for change from Gov. Rod Blagojevich in his Feb. 3 speech on the state of the state.

While there was no dissent on the issue, some lawmakers disagreed with the emphasis the governor placed upon it. State Rep. Sandra Pihos (R-42, Glen Ellyn) said the state should address other education issues first. "School funding should be our first concern," she said.

Illinois has injected an additional \$60 million into preschool programs in the past two years, but there is high demand for the programs, and waiting lists remain long.

Other rule changes

The state board voted on Feb. 17 to revise a number of current rules and eliminate hundreds of inactive rules. The board's action follows significant input from educators and constituent groups around the state, who have worked with agency personnel.

One example is the state board's action to change the rule requiring parents to sign permission forms in order for their children to receive free textbooks provided through the state board's loan program. ISBE proposed allowing districts to develop their own procedures for textbook requests.

A complete review and overhaul of ISBE's 2,800 pages of rules will continue and is expected to be completed in the next six months. The rules reductions approved by the board will not take effect until approved by the Joint Committee on Administrative Rules.

Illinois
SCHOOL BOARD
Newsbulletin

**Illinois Association
of School Boards**

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**ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

Breakfast mandatory in high-poverty districts

Alliance removes objections to allow districts to appeal

A new law signed by Gov. Rod Blagojevich in February mandates that Illinois schools offer breakfast every morning if nearly half of their students live in poverty.

Blagojevich signed the Childhood Hunger Relief Act on Feb. 15 and the law requires schools with 40 percent or more of their students on federal school lunch program to serve breakfast if they are not already doing so.

School districts have 90 days to determine which schools are required to participate. Districts are eligible for federal and state incentive grants to help cover start-up costs.

Of the 4,200 schools in Illinois, more than 2,200 participate in fed-

eral school nutrition programs on a voluntary basis. Only 358 of these 2,200 participating schools do not offer breakfast.

The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance did not initially support the bill. But lobbyists removed their opposition after language was added allowing school districts to appeal the mandate.

“The proponents were always saying ‘Well, this is paid for by federal funds,’ and it was true to the point that the actual breakfast food was covered. But to create a brand new program in a school, you’re going to have to bus the kids in earlier, you’re going to have to have cafeteria staff in the morning, which usually you wouldn’t have,” said Ben Schwarm, an Alliance lobbyist and associate



The new law mandates schools to offer breakfast when nearly half of their students live in poverty.

executive director at IASB.

Under the law, school administrators can file an appeal with the regional superintendent of schools if they believe reimbursement would not cover the entire cost of the program. To be exempted from the breakfast program, school officials must file such an appeal by Nov. 15.

Illinois districts sue over NCLB conflicts, state eyes change

School leaders nationwide are watching a lawsuit filed on Feb. 3 in federal court in Chicago that seeks clarification on conflicts between the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) and the Individuals With Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA). That’s because the suit — filed by **Ottawa** THSD 140, and joined by **Ottawa** Elementary District 141, and **Streator** Elementary District 44 — is the first major challenge in federal court to NCLB.

National School Boards Association attorney Tom Hutton believes the lawsuit filed in the U.S. District Court, Northern District of Illinois, Eastern Division, against the federal and state government may have a chance. That’s because it focuses on an apparent legal conflict between IDEA, which requires schools to develop flexible plans to meet the needs of individual students, and NCLB, which requires all students to conform to a rather inflexible timeline for reaching achievement goals.

Other districts are considering joining the suit, including **Galesburg** CUSD 205 and **Wheeling** Township Elementary District 21. Any district joining the suit would be asked to contribute up to \$10,000 to help offset the costs to **Ottawa** THSD 140.

NCLB changes

Under pressure from state lawmakers, state regulators are eyeing a change in No Child Left Behind (NCLB) rules that could make it easier for districts to meet federal requirements. The change involves how subgroups are categorized, including special education students and limited-English speakers.

Districts often are classified as not making adequate yearly progress (AYP) when only a few students in any of their subgroups can’t keep pace with NCLB standards. It takes just 40 students to form a recognized subgroup.

In 2003-04, 69 percent of those Illinois districts failing to make AYP

fell short only because their subgroups of limited-English or special education students did not meet state standards.

Thus, the state is weighing establishment of a subgroup size of 100 students.

The lawsuit filed by **Ottawa** THSD 140 seeks to have the court invalidate two crucial sections of the NCLB law. Those two sections are:

- Section 1111, State Plans. Defines how states determine adequate yearly progress and requires test data to be broken into subgroups.
- Section 1116, Academic Assessment and Local Education Agency and School Improvement. Spells out penalties for schools failing to make adequate yearly progress, from public school choice and supplemental services to reconstitution.

Sources: *Education Daily*, Vol. 38, No. 26, February 9, 2005; and *Peoria Journal Star*, February 16, 2005.

AASA conference honors school leaders

The official duties for AASA President Don Kussmaul of East Dubuque, Illinois, at this year's American Association of School Administrators' national conference included presiding over the governing board meeting. The conference, held Feb. 17-20 in San Antonio, also featured a keynote address on Feb. 18 by Rick DuFour, former superintendent of Adlai Stevenson High School District 125, **Lincolnshire**.

DuFour told a packed lecture hall that the key to an effective school is keeping one single goal in mind: all children will learn at high levels. As simple as that goal sounds, it's not what happens in most schools, DuFour said in Friday's Distinguished Lecture. DuFour is known nationally as the author of *Professional Learning Communities at Work: Best Practices for Enhancing Student Achievement*.

"All kids will learn at high levels" is not the goal of many schools; instead, the goal is typically "we will teach all children," he said.

Schools must learn to schedule in time and support for learning if children fail, DuFour said. Most schools have no plan to systematically address failure. Teachers must go back, and go back again, to address struggling students until the content is mastered.

DuFour also stressed that schools need to stop denigrating data and start acting like the school can learn from data.

Also at the conference, an Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) Reception was held on Feb.



Rick DuFour

Also see *Calendar of Events*, page 8

19 honoring 2004 Illinois superintendent of the year Frances Karanovich, Superintendent of **Macomb C.U. District 185**.

IASA confab April 27-29

This year's IASA Annual Conference, "Stand Up for Public Education – The Heart of Our Democracy" will be held April 27-29 at the Hilton and Renaissance Hotels in Springfield.

The conference, traditionally held in the spring, annually draws more than 650 school administrators. Attendees include school superintendents, assistant superintendents, state agency staff and college professors of educational administration.

For more information contact the IASA office at **217/787-9306** or e-mail: cmiddleton@iasaedu.org.

Illinois delegation carries NCLB message to Congress

Illinois delegates to the 2005 Federal Relations Network Conference in Washington, D.C., joined 800 others from across the nation on Feb. 1 to lobby members of the U.S. Congress on NCLB and other school concerns.

The lobbying day was the culmination of a three-day conference, Jan. 30 - Feb. 1, that informed and trained school leaders for lobbying. The message was: "NCLB ... fix it *and* fund it!"

Members of the Illinois delegation trekked up Capitol Hill to meet personally with Rep. Lane Evans, D-Rock Island, and Rep. Judy Biggert, R-Hinsdale. They also met with staff representing other elected officials.

Attending from Illinois were: Michael Johnson, IASB executive director; Ray Zimmerman, IASB president, Flanagan CUSD 4; Marie Slater, IASB vice president, Wheaton-Warrenville CUSD 200; Christy Coleman, IASB immediate past president, Geneseo

CUSD 228; Ben Schwarm, IASB associate executive director for governmental relations; Michael Bartlett, IASB deputy executive director; John Mannix, IASB associate executive director; Linda Dawson, IASB director of editorial services; Henry Gmitro, superintendent, CCSD 93, Carol Stream; Michael Kelly, board secretary, Plainfield CCSD 202; and Barbara Newmark, board secretary, Aptakisic-Tripp SD 102, Buffalo Grove.

The conference began with remarks by NSBA leaders, including lobbyist Michael A. Resnick. On NCLB, Resnick said states need more flexibility to measure year-to-year progress of students; Congress must replace the meat



Members of the Illinois delegation to the 2005 Federal Relations Network Conference meet with Michele Flores, a Congressional Albert Einstein Fellow assigned to Sen. Richard Durbin's office. Pictured at the meeting are, from left around the table, IASB executive director Michael Johnson, IASB president Ray Zimmerman, Flores, board member Michael Kelly from Plainfield CCSD 202 and superintendent Henry Gmitro from CCSD 93 in Bloomingdale.

ax of NCLB sanctions with a scalpel; and NCLB remedies need to be aligned with federal funding.

Also speaking was Congresswoman Judy Biggert. Biggert defended NCLB and said Congress will be reluctant to open the entire NCLB act when changes might be accomplished through regulations.

Governor pledges aid for 'grow your own' teachers

Supporters of an initiative for local teaching training, especially for minority and bilingual classrooms, hope Illinois leaders can find money in the budget to move the program from theory to practice.

Members of the Chicago Learning Campaign met on Feb. 17 in Springfield with representatives of higher education and state education associations to assess how the program can reach out to legislators. Their aim was to get funding for the Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act, which became law on Jan. 1. They hoped to obtain \$10 million in funding for the act that would add 1,000 teachers to low-income and other hard-to-staff Illinois schools by 2016, with the additional goal of retaining those teachers in their schools for seven years.

State Superintendent Randy Dunn, who welcomed the conference of 95 individuals, said schools in Southern Illinois fight the same issues of teacher quality and candidates as do schools in Chicago. The Grow Your Own (GYO) program puts the collaboration in place to help schools with community engagement around the issue of

highly qualified teachers, he said.

Dunn was referring to a Logan Square Neighborhood Association project, funded currently by a grant administered by Chicago State University. Nueva Generación currently has 30 students — most of whom also hold full-time jobs — preparing to become bilingual teachers in their neighborhood schools. GYO would allow similar programs to develop in other areas of teacher need around the state.

Teacher retention problems in Chicago Public Schools spurred several community organizations to unite as the Chicago Learning Campaign. At the first Grow Your Own conference, held in 2004 in Chicago, the campaign enlisted Senator Iris Martinez, D-Chi., and Rep. Marlow Colvin, D-Chi., as well as other members of the state legislature to introduce S.B. 1550 (now Public Act 93-082) to provide authorization for GYO programs.

Sen. Martinez, who spoke briefly at this year's conference, said the next phase is to ask for start-up money to fund the initiative statewide. "People invested in the neighborhoods are going to stay there," she said, adding

that she "has her gloves on" and is ready to fight for funding.

State Senators Jackie Collins, D-Chi., and James Meeks, I-Chi., and Illinois Representatives Susana Mendoza, D-Chi., and Toni Berrios, D-Chi., also made appearances at the conference to show their support to fund the initiative. Deputy Governor Bradley Tusk extended the governor's endorsement to the appropriation.

Neighborhood schools in Chicago face a turnover rate of 39 percent among first-year teachers. Some have turnover rates as high as 70 percent. The Grow Your Own concept emphasizes mentoring, peer support and teacher retention by seeking to train and credential aides and parents committed to their schools who may have some college-level preparation.

"We will stay in our community. We can relate to these children," said Evelia Mucino, a Nueva Generación participant who is becoming a teacher.

ISBE urges use of census data to gauge Title I

U.S. Census Bureau data for 2002 income will be used to calculate school year 2006 Title I allocations, ISBE has announced. School leaders may access this data by clicking on the link www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/FY06_2002_census_data.pdf.

ISBE said this information may aid local districts in estimating eligibility for Title I funds. The census data may also aid districts in planning for a minimum funding level for Fiscal Year 2006.

The Census Bureau has provided an online link explaining various aspects of the Small Area Income and Poverty Estimate (SAIPE) counts. According to ISBE, information on the Challenge Procedures for Estimates can be accessed at: www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe/nontechdoc/challengepro.html.

For questions, contact Jacquie Hayes at jhayes@isbe.net or Kim Lewis at kewis@isbe.net or call 217-782-5256.

Searching for a New Superintendent?

When our superintendent left unexpectedly, we contacted IASB. From the beginning our IASB search consultant told us that the candidate we selected had to be hand chosen by us to meet our individual needs. With his guidance, research expertise and prepared search material packet, we stayed organized and focused. After our experience with IASB and its team, we would not use anyone else.

Dennis R. Price, President
Rossville-Alvin CUSD 7
Rossville, IL

Let IASB professionals work for you. Contact your Director of Field Services for more information about our Superintendent Search Service at 630/629-3776 or 217/528-9688.

Don't forget ... Retired school board members are eligible to be IASB associate members.

BUSH BUDGET *from page 1*

they would probably be compelled to put the money into other areas to meet NCLB testing standards,” he said.

The president is seeking to add \$250 million to help fund his proposal for mandatory high school testing under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). He also wants to open a flexible \$1.2 billion fund for rescuing high school students who are at risk of academic failure (see table at right).

In addition, President Bush is calling for Congress to create a new \$500 million Teacher Incentive Fund to help pay incentives to teachers in troubled schools and high-need subjects, such as math and science. And, he’s seeking to inject an extra \$1 billion into the Title I program for disadvantaged students — the centerpiece of his No Child Left Behind Act — and for special education state grants.

Perhaps the most controversial target in the entire plan is vocational and technical education. Last year, the president tried to cut the vocational and technical education grants by some \$300 million, but Congress refused.

Vocational education may suffer from an outdated image of classes for students who aren’t able to go to college.

BUSH BUDGET *from page 1*

much of Blagojevich’s agenda last year — grumbled that the governor was proposing a “paltry sum” in added school funding this year.

The governor said his proposal to increase school funding by \$140 million would be paid for by pooling surplus cash balances from the dozens of various dedicated funds that have been created for specific state programs. Blagojevich says there is more than \$4 billion in these dedicated funds. Once earmarked funds are excluded (such as debt service funds, federal funds, local government funds, and road funds), approximately \$1.5 billion is available. Of this, \$420 million would be transferred into a newly created “School Endowment Fund” to be used for elementary and secondary

Estimated Illinois Allocation Under FY 2006 Bush Budget			
Program	FY 2005 Final Budget	President’s FY 2006 Request	% Change
ESEA Title I grants for disadvantaged students – IL	\$538.45 million	\$565.12 million	+5.0%
Even Start – IL	8.40 million	0	-100%
High School Intervention – IL	0	20.66 million	new
NCLB, including all of the above programs, & etc. – IL	875.65 million	891.90 million	+1.9%
Vocational education grants – IL	45.58 million	0	-100%
Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities state grants – IL	17.53 million	0	-100%
Special education state grants – IL	467.49 million	487.67 million	+4.3%
TOTAL Department of Education discretionary spending – IL	\$1.432 billion	\$1.419 billion	-0.9%

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education
Totals Compiled by IASB

In reality, most Illinois students — an estimated 360,000 students — take some vocational or technical courses, and 60 percent of all vocational and technical students go on to two- or four-year institutions of higher learning.

A recent study funded by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE)

found vocational education improves student reading and mathematics skills as shown on state achievement exams. The study, “Career and Technical Education: An Essential Piece of Education and No Child Left Behind,” is available online at: www.ioes.org/pdf/cte_nclb/CTE_NCLB_ResearchBrief105-STD.pdf.

education over the next three years.

The Fiscal Year 2006 proposal for the School Endowment Fund, then, would be \$140 million (one third of \$420 million).

The lynchpin of the governor’s overall budget is his proposal to reduce pension benefits for future government employees, allowing the state to reduce its current retirement payments by \$750 million.

Local districts likely would be charged an extra \$149 million next school year to pay for the pension overhaul proposal, top pension official Jon Bauman warned. Bauman, the executive director of the state’s Teacher Retirement System, warned on Feb. 23 that if the money is not available, he may have to arrange to

diminish general state aid payments for schools to defray the expense.

Powerful Chicago ally Mayor Richard Daley said Blagojevich’s budget ignores Illinois’ most pressing need: a more equitable system for funding public schools. Along with Senate President Jones, Daley threw his support behind a tax swap idea that would shift the burden of public education from property taxes and toward increased sales and income taxes.

“If you live in a wealthy area, such as the North Shore, you have all the money you want. But other areas of the state don’t have . . . the financial resources. It’s called unfairness. Until that [revenue swap] happens, there’s unevenness in the quality of education in Illinois,” Daley added.

Association board sets fees, honors retiring members

The IASB Board of Directors met on February 12 in Chicago following the annual IASB Leadership Conference and voted to raise the annual conference registration fee by four percent, rounded to the nearest \$10 amount, to a total of \$290. "A four percent increase approximates our experience of rate increases with our major vendors for space, food and services," said a staff-prepared explanation of the proposal approved by the board.

As expected, the board also:

- heard a proposal for raising service associate dues by \$25 to \$350
- learned that Field Services Director Sandy Gundlach is transferring to Policy Services, and
- discussed state pension system

problems that will occupy the legislature.

Board agenda items also included: a review of monitoring report ends, receipt of the December and January financial statements; a preview of the fiscal year 2006 budget assumptions; receipt of Federal Relations Network and legislative reports; and recognition of retiring IASB Directors Donna Cech of West Cook and Fred Clatfelter of Wabash Valley Divisions.



Donna Cech



Fred Clatfelter

NEWS HEADLINES

The Lake County Clerk announces that if provisional ballots cannot be counted within four days of the April 2005 election, 2005 tax bills won't reflect any **tax increases** approved by voters in that election (*Arlington Heights Daily Herald*, Feb. 1) ... A lawsuit against Quincy District 172 accuses the district of diverting funds from the Tort Immunity Fund to pay teacher salaries (*Quincy Herald-Whig*, Feb. 8) ... Three Latino families bring a class action lawsuit against the state's second-largest district, Unit District 46, Elgin, claiming **racial discrimination** in the district's new boundary map (*Arlington Heights Daily Herald*, Feb. 8) ... Parents urge a state takeover for struggling Calumet Park District 132 after the board calls for budget cuts and a tax increase (*Chicago Daily Southtown*, Feb. 9) ... The Prospect Heights Elementary District 23 Board of Education votes to make two Jewish holidays mandatory attendance days for all staff (*Arlington Heights Daily Herald*, Feb. 10) ... Faced with staff reductions and other painful cuts, Spoon River Valley CUSD 4 superintendent Nancy Beem announces she will help reduce the financial problems by retiring early (*The Journal Star*, Peoria, Feb. 15) ... The Gavin Elementary District 37 school board votes down a proposal to **sell a faulty new school** because of cracked wooden roof trusses (*Arlington Heights Daily Herald*, Feb. 15) ... The school board of Putnam County District 535 approves litigation in an insurance dispute over \$700,000. The dispute has delayed a board decision on whether to rebuild a tornado-damaged elementary school (*The Journal Star*, Peoria, Feb. 23).

Economic interest filings due

State law requires school board members, certificated administrators and some non-administrative school district employees to file annual economic interest statements by May 1 with the clerk of the county where they reside. Such statements must be filed by May 1 unless the individuals required to file have already done so this calendar year.

Generally required to file are local school district superintendents, school

business officials and certificated administrators. Others include: department heads responsible for large contracts (\$1,000 or more), those who have authority to issue or promulgate school district rules, and employees who have supervisory authority for 20 or more employees.

Those who have not received forms by mail should contact their county clerks for the economic interest forms or to obtain additional information.

Topinka hosts symposium

State Treasurer Judy Baar Topinka will be sponsoring her annual Financial Symposium for Public Investors in Springfield on May 4 and 5, 2005. The conference will be held at the Springfield Hilton Hotel. More information will be coming through the mail or you may log on to the Treasurers' Web page at www.state.il.us/treas/education/symposium.htm.

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One Feb. referendum approved, but April ballots will be loaded

Oswego is sole winner; 66 tax proposals and 28 bond issues on tap

Although results are not yet official, voters approved only one of six school tax referenda on the February primary ballot, the referendum in **Oswego** CUSD 308. It calls for a 30-cent increase in the educational tax rate to \$3.02 per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation.

The narrowest defeat was in **Palatine** CCSD 15, where it appears that a 48-cent increase failed by 168 votes, 7,741 “yes” votes to 7,909 “no” votes. The district is faced with the likelihood of making \$12 million in cuts, including 254 positions on staff, 62 of them teachers.

Referendums also failed in: **Gurnee** SD 56; **Harlem** CSD 122, **Loves Park**; **New Lenox** SD122; and **Oak Grove** SD 68, **Bartonville**.

Meanwhile, a total of 94 school finance questions will appear on the April 5 ballot, with 66 tax proposals and 28 bond issues, according to an unofficial count. Of the tax proposals, 55 are education fund increase propositions, six are propositions to increase the extension limitation under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL or so-called tax caps), four are

operations and maintenance fund propositions, and one is a transportation fund proposition.

The tax referendum total is higher than normal for an April consolidated election, possibly reflecting widespread deficits facing Illinois schools. Since 1991, a typical April election has yielded 54 tax questions. The highest total was 89 tax referendums in 2003, and the lowest was 24 in 1999.

The count of bond issues is well below the average of 44 for April elections since 1991. Only one recent April election – the 2003 election that saw 21 bond issues – has fielded fewer bond issues.

Twenty-two of the 28 bond issues in April are for building bond issues. The main exceptions are proposals for issuing working cash bonds.

Bond proposals range in size from \$220 million in **Plainfield** CCSD 202, to \$215,000 in **Ohio** CHSD 505. Tax increase propositions range from a high of 1.22 percent in **Ohio** CHSD 505, to a low of .03 percent in Cook County District 154, **Thornton**.

Source: Illinois State Board of Elections.

(Reminder: A calendar of key dates and deadlines for the April school board elections can be found at www.iasb.com/election05/electioncalendar.htm

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 22 – Two Rivers Spring Dinner Meeting, 6 pm, Pikeland CUSD 10

March 28 – Targeting Student Learning: Focusing on the Real Work of Boards, 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm, Best Western-Prairie Inn, Galesburg

March 30 – South Cook Division Spring Dinner Meeting, 6 pm, DoubleTree Hotel, Alsip (formerly Radisson Hotel)

April 5 – Consolidated Election Day, School Board Member Elections

April 13 – Wabash Valley Division Summer Governing Meeting, 6:30 pm, Richard’s Farm Restaurant, Casey

April 16-19 – Annual Convention, NSBA, San Diego, CA

April 25 – North Cook Division Spring Dinner Meeting, 6 pm, Location TBD

April 27-29 – IASA Annual Conference, Springfield - Hilton and Renaissance Hotels

May 2 – Corn Belt Division Summer Governing Meeting, 6:30 pm, McDonalds’ Restaurant, Fairbury

May 2 – Kaskaskia Division Summer Governing Meeting, 6:30 pm, The Depot, Vandalia

May 3 – Western Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Chandler’s Neighborhood Grill, Macomb (formerly Macomb Dining Co.)

May 3 – Egyptian Division Summer Governing Meeting, 6:30 pm, Holiday Inn, Mt. Vernon

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



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