

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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Gov. seeks \$1.5 billion in new school spending

Would fund growth via 'Gross Receipts Tax'

Governor Rod Blagojevich called for roughly a \$1.5 billion increase in school spending for Fiscal Year 2008 when he delivered his combined State of the State and budget address on March 7.

He urged lawmakers to increase the foundation level by \$686 per pupil, spend \$1.5 billion over the next three years to renew the state's school construction program, and invest more money in school textbooks and technology.

To pay for the massive new pro-

grams, the governor pushed for a \$6 billion "Gross Receipts Tax" on most Illinois businesses, excluding small business, gaming, and a few others. The current corporate income tax would be eliminated. The Gross Receipts Tax (GRT) is an assessment on the total amount of receipts a business takes in – as opposed to an income tax on the business' net profit. The state would assess a rate of 0.5 percent on the goods economy and 1.8 percent on the service economy.

Meanwhile, the governor pledged to spend \$209 million to increase the rate at which schools are reimbursed for special education teachers and aides

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Laws conflict on canvassing of April vote

There is a conflict in Illinois law between the school code and the election code regarding who is responsible for canvassing election results: the board of education or the county clerk. School boards may wish to contact their county clerk of record to determine who needs to be doing this.

School boards that have a referendum on the April 17 ballot may also wish to contact their bond counsel to discuss the matter.

For more information about canvassing and related election issues, visit the IASB Web site at: <http://www.iasb.com/canvass.htm>.



The Bush budget would eliminate the Even Start program.

Bush budget plan: Expand in high schools, cut vo-tech

President George W. Bush's new budget proposal released on Feb. 6 includes a new focus on high schools, to be funded largely through cuts to career and technical education and many other programs.

Overall the Fiscal Year 2008 (FY08)

request for discretionary funding is the same as last year – \$56 billion. Details include:

- Career and Technical Education programs would be cut from the current funding level of \$1.3 billion to \$617.4 million in FY08.

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Interim Superintendent pledges timely state tests

In a recent electronic newsletter from Interim State Superintendent Christopher Koch, a few words of encouragement were offered for schools regarding state test scores and AYP determinations.

Koch first noted that ISBE “has worked diligently” to get this data to schools as quickly as possible.

“While we are not satisfied with the outcomes please understand that, as it relates to the upcoming assessment cycle, we are taking every possible precaution to ensure the timeliness of the process — from the delivery of test booklets to the calculation of AYP and issuance of school report cards” Koch added.

Koch also recently said that ISBE welcomes feedback from schools “as we plan for the 2007 reports.” For questions, email rmccabe@isbe.net or jcraig@isbe.net.

More Illinois students take and pass AP exams

The state has seen a dramatic increase in college-level Advanced Placement (AP) participation among its at-risk students, and more Illinois high school students than ever are succeeding on AP exams.

Increasing success for Illinois high school students was shown on the College Board’s third annual Advanced Placement Report to the Nation. Advanced Placement is a cooperative endeavor between secondary schools and colleges and universities. Participating students gain college-level skills and in many cases earn college credit while they are still in high school.

The report shows more low-income, African-American, and Hispanic or Latino students are taking AP Exams. In 2001, 1,841 low-income students took AP classes – compared to 6,229 students in 2006.

Glitch delays 2006 test results on PSAE, scores months late

Just days before elementary students were scheduled to take the 2007 Illinois Standardized Achievement Tests (ISAT), parents began getting school report cards for their children’s 2006 tests.

The latest delay announced by the state on Feb. 16 means schools had to administer another round of tests, beginning on March 12, without having a chance to learn



Christopher Koch

from last year’s results. The state tests are used to rate schools against No Child Left Behind standards, and schools can face NCLB sanctions if too few children meet standards, and even if various demographic groupings of students fall short of the standards.

The latest delay in delivering test results concerns the Prairie State Achievement Exam, which is administered to high school juniors. The problem arose because some student scores from the two days of PSAE testing were listed separately, instead of being combined. Thus a student’s scores could have been listed twice if, for instance, testing materials had the student’s name with middle initial on one testing day and without the initial on the other testing day. The testing firm’s contract with the state did not call for merging such records.

The 2006 round of state tests was plagued with problems from the outset. Thousands of tests and associated materials arrived late, delaying the start of last year’s testing cycle. Then, 11,000 tests were missing demographic data needed to process the results. All 160,000 high-school tests had to be rescored after Texas-based Harcourt Assessment, Inc. – which held the multimillion-dollar ISAT contract – made an error grading them.

According to state law, schools should have received school report cards with 2006 PSAE results by Oct.

31. Report cards were also due to be released by Oct. 31 for the ISATs, which is given to grade school and middle school students. Yet grade schools did not get test results back from the state until February, when high schools were still waiting for PSAE results. Third- to eighth-grade students were tested in reading and math on the ISAT.

The Illinois Student Report is supposed to provide parents with their child’s overall performance on the tests and it gives the breakdown of how the student scored on the multiple choice and extended response, or written, portions of the tests. The state has included explanatory text to help families understand exactly what the scores mean.

For the first time, the test is nationally normed, or sampled, from tests in the entire country.


“You may have noticed some changes with regard to reports,” explained Interim State Superintendent Christopher Koch. “Starting with the 2006 ISAT tests, districts, schools and families have received more information regarding their students’ performance.”

Illinois
SCHOOL BOARD
Newsbulletin

**Illinois Association
of School Boards**

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**ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**



Snow plows were working around the clock during the Nov. 30-Dec. 1 winter storm in Illinois.

Administrators should ask for notice of future FEMA grants

School administrators need to inform their local emergency manager they'd like to be notified if any federal disaster fund grants ever become available. Otherwise administrators might overlook the announcement when it is published or sent out.

That advice came recently from a state disaster agency official after federal funds were granted to aid some school districts that applied for snow removal funds for the destructive Nov. 30-Dec.1, 2006, winter storm that affected most of the state.

As typically happens with declared disaster areas, federal officials held several briefings to help eligible school districts apply for the disaster assistance. News releases and newspaper stories announced the events. But as usual, there was a very narrow window of opportunity – just 30 days – to apply

for such funds.

Federal funds for the Dec. 1 snow removal already have been obligated to the state for disbursement to eligible schools that applied under the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Public Assistance reimbursement program.

Sandwich CUSD 430, for example, will receive nearly \$3,500 from FEMA to help offset 75 percent of the district's cost of snow removal from school sidewalks and access routes.

To locate your local emergency manager, also known as the local (county and municipal) Emergency Services and Disaster Agencies (ESDAs), see the list online at: http://www.state.il.us/iema/contacts/contacts_esda.htm.

For more information, phone the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) at 217/ 785-9890.

Reading First grants fund reform push by private firm

More than 20 suburban schools in south Cook County are getting grant money to make over a classroom by using multiple intelligences and differentiated learning — and receiving on-site teacher training on how to use it all.

Participating schools include: Sandburg, Maya Angelou and Lowell-Longfellow in Harvey; Sykuta and Meadowview in Country Club Hills; Lincoln in Calumet City; Longwood and Hickory Bend in Glenwood; 21st Century and Algonquin in Park Forest; and Beacon Hill in Chicago Heights.

Innovative Learning Solutions, a private education consulting firm, is revamping classrooms in those schools. The firm revamps classrooms throughout the country, providing new textbooks and a new organization based on modern theories of learning. Students from different levels and with different preferred learning styles are taught in the ways most accessible to them.

But unlike most teacher training, which puts a room full of teachers in front of a PowerPoint presentation, the new program pits instructors from the private firm against students. It essentially puts the firm's own system and revamped classrooms on trial for the participating schools' teachers to watch during instruction time.

ISBE decided to bring this classroom makeover program to several schools that did not fully meet learning standards set by the federal NCLB Act. If the system catches on at a particular school, there's a chance more money could flow from the state to the district for more training and materials.

Funding for the program comes from Reading First, a component of NCLB, and is channeled to schools through ISBE.

Innovative Learning Solutions will soon return to participating schools to do a follow-up.

Want IASB public school governance documents for downloading and printing?

www.iasb.com

'Limiting tax rate' referenda to raise PTELL rate limits fail in February

Voters at the Feb. 27 consolidated primary election voted down ballot propositions in three school districts to increase the "limiting tax rate" to raise the level of the so-called tax cap limitation. Voters apparently rejected all such proposed increases, including those in **Darien SD 61**; **Downers Grove GSD 58**; and **JS Morton HSD 201**, Cicero.

The three limiting tax rate increases were placed on the ballot under terms of a new law adopted in the spring 2006 session of the Illinois General Assembly (Public Act 94-976). The new statute overhauled the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), commonly known as the "tax caps" law. The overhaul was designed to develop a more rational system for considering tax rate increases.

The law also impacted how referendum questions will appear on the ballot and required new "supplemental information" on the impact to taxpayers in counties where the PTELL limiting rate is in effect. In addition, the law enables districts to budget their resources more consistently and to seek an increase in the limiting rate for up to four years.

The changes basically eliminated the option for school districts subject to PTELL to seek a direct increase in their statutory tax rate through referendum, even if the tax rate currently is less than the maximum rate permitted by law. But the new law does, in effect, permit the tax rate to be increased, although not above the legal limit, and only for up to four years.

Although none of the proposed PTELL increases were approved this time around, voters approved three of 18 such propositions on the ballot last November, in the first test of the new PTELL law.

The proposed PTELL referendums would have increased the limiting tax rate from .10% to .75%.

'7 percent solution' tax break extension bill moves in Senate

Would also impact state's school aid formula

A committee of the Illinois State Senate recently approved legislation that would extend the alternate homestead property tax exemption ("7% Solution") for Cook County and other counties that adopt the exemption in time. The deadline is six months after the bill's effective date for House Bill 23 (Lang, D-Chicago).

It would increase the eligible exemption cap from \$20,000 to \$60,000. It would also extend the program for three years in Cook County and four years in all other counties.

Opposed by the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance, the bill not only would reduce (or shift) the property tax revenues in Cook County, but would likely have a significant effect on the school aid formula statewide. The Senate revenue committee approved it on Feb. 22, and the bill passed out of the full Senate the next day.

The legislation also creates a new property tax exemption for residential property owned and occupied as a residence by a veteran. It will now be sent to the full Illinois Senate for consideration.

On another topic, the House Envi-

ronmental Health Committee has approved a bill that would require schools to use environmentally safe products for cleaning. House Bill 895 (May, D-Highland Park) would require the Illinois Green Government Coordinating Council (IGGCC), in consultation with other agencies, to establish and amend on an annual basis specifications for environmentally-sensitive cleaning and maintenance products for use in school facilities.

By no later than 90 days after implementation of specifications, all schools would have to establish a green cleaning policy and exclusively purchase and use environmentally-sensitive cleaning products that comply. The lone exception is that a school could deplete its existing cleaning and maintenance supply stocks.

The Alliance testified in opposition to the bill in committee, and to address Alliance concerns, the sponsor amended the bill to state that schools must comply if the requirement would be "economically feasible." If the school district finds that it is not economically feasible it must provide an annual written notification to the IGGCC. The IGGCC, headed by the Lieutenant Governor, is comprised of the directors of seven state agencies charged with coordinating efforts to reduce pollution and protect the environment.

File economic interest statements

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.

Finance referenda on April 17 ballot show wide range of needs

Numerous school finance referendums, including both tax and bond issues, will be featured on the April 17 general election ballot. Of the many tax propositions to be decided, most appear to be education fund increase proposals.

Tax increases on the ballot include proposals for a:

- 75-cent increase in **Aurora East USD 131**
- 70-cent increase in **Ridgeland District 122**
- 50-cent increase in **Aurora West USD 129**
- 50-cent increase in **Sterling CUSD 5**
- 35-cent increase in **Belvidere CUSD 100**

Most bond issues seek approval to issue bonds for new construction. Bond proposals on the ballot range in size from as high as \$80 million in **Geneva CUSD 304**, to as low as \$13.7 million in **New Berlin CUSD 16**.

Other significant bond issues call for proposed new indebtedness of:

- \$94 million in **Glenbrook High School District 225**
- \$75 million in **Batavia CUSD 101**
- \$58.3 million in **Edwardsville CUSD 7**
- \$53.2 million in **Kaneland CUSD 302**
- \$40 million in **Bensenville District 2**
- \$30 million in **Sycamore CUSD 427**
- \$25.6 million in **Homer School District 33C**
- \$20 million in **Troy CCSD 30C**
- \$13.9 million in **South Beloit CUSD 320**

A complete list of the tax and bond propositions on the ballot is not yet available. But an overview of election results will be reported in the May issue of the *Illinois School Board Newsbulletin*. For more information visit the Illinois State Board of Elections' Web site at: <http://www.elections.state.il.us>.

NEWS HEADLINES

Carthage (Feb. 21, *Hancock County Journal Pilot*) The board of the newly formed Illini West High School district – which combines the Carthage, La Harpe and Dallas City school districts – has rejected a request to pay tuition for Dallas City seniors to attend a neighboring high school.

Charleston (Feb. 21, *Times-Courier*, Charleston) Charleston CUSD 1 school board recently voted to start the school year early, making Aug. 14 the first date of student attendance.

Chicago (Feb. 5, *Chicago Tribune*) After 12 years of school reforms, Mayor Richard Daley, who was recently re-elected, will soon announce school closings under its Renaissance 2010 project, which aims to close “chronically underperforming” schools in Chicago SD 299 and open 100 independently run schools.

Country Club Hills (Feb. 23, *Chicago Daily Southtown*) Patricia Welch, Hillcrest High School’s “Mama Hawk” has been chosen as the state’s Principal of the Year.

Morris (Feb. 21, *Morris Daily Herald*) The Morris District 54 board will permit school board candidates to have a say in discussions involving the search for a new superintendent. The district is having its attorney draw up papers with confidentiality clauses to be signed by the board candidates.

Naperville (Feb. 22, *Naperville Sun*) On Feb. 20 the Naperville District 203 school board listened to 25 residents argue for or against adoption of the textbook *Essentials of Anatomy and Physiology*, which contains controversial content.

Oak Lawn (Feb. 16, *Chicago Daily Southtown*) As predicted last fall, cuts are inevitable at Oak Lawn Community High School as the result of the failure of a November referendum. Oak Lawn CHSD 229 offi-

cial are preparing to shave \$1 million from next year’s budget.

Palatine (Feb. 22, *The Daily Herald*, Arlington Heights) Township HSD 211 wants the state to retest all Illinois high school students on the Prairie State Achievement Exam in the senior year. District 211 wants to give students a full four years to pass the PSAE. An estimated \$4.8 million is needed to bankroll a retest for the 47 percent of Illinois juniors who do not score at grade level on the exam.

Peoria (Feb. 20, *The Journal Star*, Peoria) District 150 announced it would hold two forums for parents and community members to gather input on new start times for next school year. A district committee has recommended starting high schools 25 minutes later, middle schools 25 minutes earlier and primary schools 15 minutes later.

Round Lake (Feb. 23, *The Daily Herald*, Arlington Heights) The Round Lake CUSD 116 finance authority’s annual report to the state indicates that the severe financial difficulties of the 1990s and early 2000s may have been largely overcome. But problems remain, including increasingly tense negotiations between the district and the Education Association, which has filed an intent-to-strike notice.

Sandwich (Feb. 16, *The Times*, Ottawa) Sandwich CUSD 430 will receive nearly \$3,500 from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help offset the cost of snow removal for the near-record Dec. 1 snowstorm.

Springfield (Feb. 20, *State Journal-Register*) The Springfield District 186 Board of Education plans to join the growing number of voices calling for changes in the federal NCLB Act. The board intends to draft a resolution to send to lawmakers.

GOVERNOR'S BUDGET *from page 1*

– the first adjustment since 1985. And to completely meet the state's obligation for reimbursing other "categorical" costs such as school transportation, the governor pledged an additional \$150 million.

A large influx of new funds would be going into key areas that could satisfy – at least for a while – those pushing for the so-called tax swap between property and income taxes, according to education lobbyists.

"What a lot of districts out there are looking for is a more comprehensive approach that would bring in a source of revenue that would be continuing and bring up that foundation level," according to Ben Schwarm, Associate Executive Director of IASB, and lead lobbyist with the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance. "[For] The people who want comprehensive funding reform, will this answer all of their questions? Probably not, but it will go a long way toward that."

Highlights of the governor's school

spending plan include:

- A new investment of \$10 billion in schools over the next four years – which the governor characterized as three times bigger than any increase in state history; for more information see www.illinois.gov/education/
- The GRT tax plan mentioned earlier, which is opposed by business groups that say it will raise prices on goods and services for all consumers. The governor says it will close corporate loopholes, however, and give the middle class some much-needed tax relief; for details see www.illinois.gov/taxfairness/
- "Illinois Covered" – a healthcare plan the governor says will cover the 1.4 million uninsured adults in Illinois and provide assistance to middle-income families and small businesses struggling to keep up with health insurance costs; for more information see www.illinoiscovered.com.

AASA conference features best practices of schooling; IASB staffers contribute

The 2007 National Conference of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) was held March 1-4 at the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center in New Orleans. Participants conferred about: what's happening in local districts; best practices in curriculum, leadership, technology, governance, school law and more; and school improvement leadership.

"The Conference enabled us to hear from today's leading thinkers and practitioners in education who examined the best practices out there in leadership, curriculum, technology, governance, school law and many other topics," according to Eugene White, AASA President.

More than 6,500 participants attended the three-day event, the largest annual meeting of school superintendents in the United States. General session speakers included Sandra Day O'Connor, the former Supreme Court Justice; John Kotter, Professor, Harvard Business School; Daniel Pink, Contributing Editor at Fast Company and author of *A Whole New Mind*; Larry Sabato, Professor, University of Virginia and Director, Center for Politics; and former homeless person Christopher Gardner, now owner and CEO of Christopher Gardner International Holdings.

Representing IASB as staff participants at the conference were executive director Michael D. Johnson, and field services directors Dawn E. Miller and Donna Johnson. Also in attendance was senior field services director Douglas P. Blair, incoming communications department head and associate executive director John Lyday, and field services administrative assistants Judy K. Niezgodka and Holly Jack.

For more information, visit the AASA Web site: <http://www.aasa.org/nce/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2210&mmItemNumber=2065>.

Administrators gather next month at IASA conference in Springfield

The 42nd Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) is scheduled for April 25-27 in Springfield, at the Springfield Hilton Hotel and the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel and Conference Center. A brief summary of the conference program is available online at: <http://www.iasaedu.org/>.

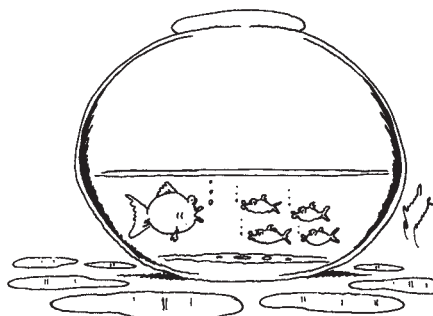
Featured speakers will include:

Murray Banks, accomplished Ironman triathlete; Dan Mulhern, first gentleman of Michigan; and Eric Robinson, a public relations specialist with Frontline Strategies, Inc.

IASA's conference breakout sessions are focused on student achievement, policy and data driven decisions, as well as improving the high school experience.

Christopher Koch, the interim state superintendent of education, is slated to make an address on Friday morning, followed by the presentation of a federal education update on NCLB, IDEA, and Medicaid Funding from U.S. Representatives Judy Biggert, Danny K. Davis, and Phil Hare.

For more information about this conference, which annually draws more than 650 school administrators, contact IASA by phone at 217/787-9306.



"Okay, class, activity period is now over."

IASB Board considers budget, weighs expanded training

The IASB Board of Directors met on Feb. 17 in Springfield and heard budget assumptions for next year, including plans to expand training for school board members by adding four new IASB staff members.

The board also approved a 4 percent increase in the annual conference registration fee, raising it to \$315 per registrant. "A 4 percent increase approximates our experience of rate increases with our major vendors for space, food and services," it was noted in the board meeting packet.

Staffing changes were also approved:

- After 37 years at IASB, Jerry Glaub will be retiring on May 1, and will work part-time or on special projects. His position as Associate Executive Director and communications department head will be filled by John Lyday.
- Kimberly Munch moved from temporary to regular Field Services Department support status as of Jan. 1.
- Donna Johnson will be moving from Field Services to head up a newly-created search department.
- Kimberly Small will be moving from

the Policy Department to the General Counsel's Office.

- Kevin Bell, assistant director in Governmental Relations, resigned on Nov. 30, and a replacement is currently being considered.

Executive Director Michael Johnson noted that the Springfield headquarters expansion has been completed. Four new professional offices were added, along with six support-staff work stations. Expanded warehouse space was built adjacent to a new conference room. The overall project better enables the Association to respond to its members' increasing needs.

The staff shared board member comments from the Association's February Leadership Conference, which included training on Servant Leadership and a tour of Chicago's Healy School. Comments included:

Workshop — "Content caused participants to view their board role/responsibilities in entirely new ways. This was a workshop for veteran, perhaps third-year, board members and should be considered as a conference workshop offering."

Healy School — "The curriculum



IASB's Assistant to the Executive Director, Pat Culler, celebrated her 70th birthday on March 8 at a staff luncheon in her honor.

and fine arts being offered, despite having to deal with three Chinese dialects, as well as English, were amazing. The energy of the administration and the staff, as well as the student discipline, was phenomenal."

It was announced that Fred Blue, Starved Rock division director, and Gerald White, Western division director, will not be seeking re-election to their local boards in April. Both expressed feelings of appreciation for their time as IASB leaders.

The next meeting of the IASB Board of Directors will be May 18-19, at the Crowne Plaza, Springfield.

New board members can get fast start via training

How does a new school board member carry out his or her new responsibilities without stepping on one of those landmines that litter the school board landscape? Helping them get off to a fast, productive start is a high priority of IASB.

The Association is offering two workshops for newly elected board members. **The Basics of School District Governance** focuses on roles and responsibilities. **The Basics of School Law and Finance** focuses on financing and legal requirements.

Tuition is \$180 per workshop and includes materials and meals. Sign up

for both workshops and save \$40; with a tuition charge of \$320. And superintendents attending a workshop with their board can join them for just \$50 per workshop, or \$85 if they sign up to attend both.

The workshops will be offered at the following locations:

- Governance, May 4-5, Touch of Nature, SIU-Carbondale
- Governance, May 11-12, Holiday Inn, Decatur or Tinley Park
- Law and Finance, June 1-2, Doubletree Hotel, Bloomington
- Law and Finance, June 8-9, NIU

Naperville, and Gibby's on the Green (formerly Seasons at Rend Lake) in Whittington

IASB is also offering both workshops in a single three-day session:

- June 14-16, Hilton Hotel, Springfield
- June 28-30, Swissotel, Chicago

Both three-day workshops run from Thursday morning through Saturday afternoon and will cost \$320 per person. Lodging is also available at discounted rates. Register online by visiting <http://www.iasb.com> or get your registration forms by calling IASB at 217/528-9688 or 630/629-3776, ext. 1103.

FEDERAL BUDGET *from page 1*

- Programs eliminated would include Title V Innovative Education grants (currently funded at \$99 million), Education Technology State Grants (currently funded at \$273 million), Smaller Learning Communities (currently funded at \$90.4 million), and the Even Start program (currently funded at \$111.6 million).
- For Title I, which includes the No Child Left Behind Act, the proposed budget would increase funding by \$1.2 billion. The increase would be directed towards the Administration's high school reform proposal – which is part of the Department of Education's recommendations for NCLB reauthorization. Therefore, the proposed increase would be accompanied by new requirements/mandates for school districts via the expansion of NCLB beyond grades 3-8.

The president is requesting \$500 million for Title I School Improvement grants that would be available on a competitive basis to school districts.

The proposed budget would level-fund special education, based on the FY07 level of \$10.491 billion (before the \$200 million increase that is pending in the FY07 continuing resolution). The Department of Education is projecting that 21,000 additional students, ages 3-21, will receive services in FY2008. According to the department budget summary, the request of \$10.5 billion for IDEA grants to states would provide

an average of \$1,528 per student.

The budget calls for a \$100 million cut to the Improving Teacher Quality State Grants (NCLB/ESEA Title II) program, which is the largest federal investment in strengthening teacher quality. The administration proposes taking that \$100 million and redirecting it into the Teacher Incentive Fund – raising that program from \$99 million in the FY07 proposal to \$199 million in FY08.

The budget request also calls for the elimination of the \$59.9 million Teacher Quality Enhancement Grants in Title II of the Higher Education Act, which are matching grants aimed at strengthening teacher preparation efforts.

Safe and Drug-Free Schools funding would be cut by more than \$200 million (from \$525.4 million to \$324.2 million in FY08).

The budget requests \$300 million that can be used for private school vouchers (technically some could go for public school choice or tutoring). Within that is \$250 million for “promise vouchers” for students attending public schools in restructuring under NCLB (there would be a \$2,500 voucher plus eligible Title I/IDEA money – approximately \$4,000 per student).

School board lobbyists criticize the voucher allotment, saying the federal focus should be on investing adequately in public schools that are open to all students and accountable to all taxpayers.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 26 – Starved Rock Division Spring Dinner Meeting,
Celebrations 150, Utica, 5 p.m.
Candidates Briefing

March 30 – Board Secretaries Workshop on FOIA/OMA/E-MAIL, O'Fallon, 10 a.m.
Workshop

April 3-10 – Passover

April 8 – Easter

April 14-17 – National School Boards Association Annual Conference, San Francisco, CA

April 17 – Consolidated Election Day, School Board Member Elections

April 18-19 – ISBE Board Meeting, Springfield

April 20 – Board Secretaries Workshop on FOIA/OMA/E-MAIL, Springfield, IL, 10 a.m. Workshop

April 24 – Illini Summer Governing Meeting, Historic Lincoln Hotel, Urbana, 6:15 p.m.

April 25-27 – IASA Annual Conference, Springfield Hilton and Renaissance Hotels

April 27 – Board Secretaries Workshop-FOIA-OMA-E-MAIL, Elmhurst, 9:30 a.m. Workshop



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