

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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Summit preps school leaders to advance Vision 20/20

Meetings with state lawmakers open unprecedented dialogue

More than 600 school board members, superintendents, principals, school business officials, and other education leaders in the state attended the first-ever Alliance Leadership Summit, held Feb. 17-18, in Springfield.

The two-day event, at Springfield's convention center, was jointly sponsored by the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators, Illinois Association of School Business Officials, and the Illinois Principals Association.

As the primary school management organizations in the state, their goal for the Summit was to bring their individual members together as a team to hear from guest speakers and panelists on timely public policy issues. More importantly, the Summit also helped prepare participants on how to advocate effectively on the issues affecting public schools.

Day one included presentations by Joseph Scherer, executive direc-

See **OVERVIEW** on page 8

See more on Summit:

Policy expert p.4

Advocacy expert p.4

Meetings with lawmakers p.5

Education rep p.5

Political panel p.6

Apple's Rankin p.6

Education group leaders p.7



School leaders, including IASB Director Thomas Neeley (second from right), spent Wednesday afternoon meeting with their lawmakers in the Capitol complex. These leaders, for example, met with State Rep. Keith Sommer (center).

Workshops offer mandated board training, basic governance principles for board electees

IASB's 2015 new board member workshops will be held in 20 locations throughout the state during the months of May, June and July. The dates and locations as well as other information about the two-day events are available at <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/newBMworkshops2015.pdf>.

Scheduled topics will be the same at all 20 locations, with the first day to encompass all state-mandated workshops for school board members, including:

- Professional Development Leadership Training (PDLT)
- Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA)

- Open Meetings Act (OMA) Training

Illinois law states that board members must take PDLT, PERA and OMA training, and these workshops are designed to meet that requirement.

Day two will feature IASB's Basics of Governance covering board member roles and responsibilities. This day of the workshop will provide participants with an opportunity to:

- identify the role and work of the school board;
- distinguish board work from that of the superintendent and staff;
- understand how each member relates to the full board; and

See **WORKSHOPS** on page 10

Excel nominations

This year's nomination forms for Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year program are now available for completion online. The form can be found at www.isbe.net/those-who-excel/pdfs/those-who-excel-app.pdf. Nominations must be postmarked by June 8. Call ISBE's public information office at 217/782-4648 to get answers to any questions.

Enhanced P.E. standards

The revised Illinois Learning Standards for Physical Development and Health are ready for implementation. During the 2014-15 school year, districts are planning for and phasing in implementation of the standards to be ready for full implementation in the 2015-16 academic year. See an overview webinar online at: http://preventobesityil.org/Oct_1_PE_webinar_registration/. Or see a webinar with tips for implementing these new standards, online at: http://preventobesityil.org/oct_9_pe_webinar/.

Measles action required

As of Feb. 17, 12 infants and two adults in Cook County had been diagnosed with measles. Widespread outbreaks are documented across the country, with more than 100 confirmed cases. It is quite contagious and is spread by coughing and sneezing. After onset of a single case, the school is required to exclude all students who have not presented proof of immunity, keeping them out for up to 21 days after the last reported case. Acceptable proof of immunity includes: A written record from a health professional indicating dates of vaccination and kind of vaccine used; or from a physician indicating the date when the student had measles; or a lab report showing a protective measles antibody level as shown by a reliable test.

State Board appointees include new chairman, four additional administration picks

A new chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education, James Meeks, took over in January and four other members were appointed in February by Gov. Bruce Rauner.

Meeks is senior pastor of Salem Baptist Church of Chicago. He also successfully ran as an independent for the Illinois State Senate for the 15th Legislative District in 2002, and retired from the Illinois General Assembly in 2013 after three terms. During his Senate tenure, Meeks served as chairman of the Senate's Education Committee and was known as a staunch advocate for school reform. He has led campaigns for increased school funding, high-quality teachers and school choice. In 2009 and 2010, he formed a bipartisan coalition in support of opportunity scholarships for children in Chicago's worst-performing public schools. Also appointed to the state board were:

- **Lula Ford.** An educator for 34 years, Ford has also served as the assistant director of Illinois Central Management Services. Ford began her career as an elementary school teacher in **Chicago Public Schools 299**. In her three decades at CPS, she served as a counselor, principal, assistant superintendent and chief instruction officer.
- **Craig Lindvahl.** Having earned the Milken National Educator Award, he also has twice been a finalist for Illinois Teacher of the Year. He spent 34 years in **Teutopolis District 50** schools, teaching music, band, television production and entrepreneurship programs. Lindvahl is also an award-winning filmmaker. He currently owns Callan Films Corp.,

which produces documentaries.

- **Roberta Parks.** Parks is the vice president for Unity Point Health Methodist/Proctor Foundation, overseeing that \$27 million organization. She was employed for 25 years for the Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce, including four years as president, and has also worked for the City of Peoria as the intergovernmental coordinator.
- **Eligio Cerda Pimentel.** Pimentel, a patent attorney and a former mechanical engineer, has a demonstrated track record of supporting education in underprivileged communities. He serves on the board of Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, serving students in Chicago who could not otherwise afford a private college-prep education.

There are nine members on the

See **ISBE** on page 12



James Meeks



Lula Ford



Craig Lindvahl



Roberta Parks



Eligio Pimentel

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

Illinois Association of School Boards

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State Board seeks 10.7% boost to Illinois education spending, end to proration

In late January, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) unanimously recommended a \$730 million, or a 10.7 percent increase to state education spending. The Fiscal Year 2016 budget recommendation would end the 89 percent proration schools are currently faced with and fully fund the \$6,119 per pupil Foundation Level experts have recommended.



Christopher Koch

\$566 million of the increased funding would be directed toward General State Aid, while the remaining dollars would be split between six other categories: Mandated Category, Standards and Assessments, Academic Improvement, School Reform and Accountability, other categorical assistance, and miscellaneous expenditures.

Included in the budget request is \$126.4 million for technology needs, with around \$100 million to provide broadband internet delivery to underserved schools

An additional \$8.9 million is for electronic devices needed to comply with PARCC testing requirements.

Also requested was a \$48.7 million increase for transportation funding. The Regular/Vocational Transportation line item has been subject to cuts since

FY 2010 and is currently prorated at 72 percent.

The suggested increase would bring that level up to 80 percent funding. Other funding increase requests include:

- \$5 million for assessments;
- \$50 million for Early Childhood Education;
- \$12 million for Bilingual Education;
- \$2.4 million for development and maintenance of the Illinois Longitudinal Data System;
- \$5 million for the Extended Learning Time program; and
- \$5 million for the state's lowest performing schools.

New items were also included in the budget request: Low-income Advance Placement, Teacher Recruitment, STEM Career Pathways, Diverse Educator Recruitment and a line item for the Alternative Model for Determining an Adequate Foundation Level to support the Educational Funding Advisory Board study.

In addition to spending increases, some budget funding was suggested for removal by ISBE. Those programs include: After School Matters, Children's Mental Health Partnership, Southwest Organized Project, and the autism line item.

ISBE's budget proposal can be viewed in its entirety at www.isbe.net/budget.

Bucking state testing mandate on PARCC would have cost big

Chicago District 299, the third-largest school district in the country, recently decided not to buck a state mandate after all to give the PARCC to all of its students this school year. State Supt. Chris Koch had responded that if Chicago did not implement the tests the state would be deemed out of compliance by the federal Department of Education.

Consequences could have been minimal or more severe. Koch said the concern was for the potential elimination of federal funding of education in Illinois.

The PARCC test was created by the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers, one of two federally funded multi-state consortia tasked with creating new Common Core tests with some \$360 million in federal funds. One of the key ideas behind creation of these exams was that most students in the United States would be taking them, allowing for legitimate comparisons of student achievement from state to state.

In 2010, PARCC had 26 member states, but it has suffered major defections since, with Illinois and just ten other states now committed to using the PARCC exam this year.

Public high schools hit new record graduation rate of 83 percent

The latest data from the National Center for Education Statistics reveals that the graduation rate for public high schools has risen from 80 percent to 81 percent in the past year, hitting an all-time high.

The new Illinois numbers are even higher, at 83 percent.

These rates represent only those students who earned a standard high

school diploma within four years of entering high school, so they do not include students who earned a high school equivalency (ex-GED) or certificates of completion.

The numbers also do not include those students who took more than four years to earn a standard high school diploma.

"It is likely that including students who take longer than four years to

earn a standard high school diploma would increase the national graduation rate above 85 percent," according to Jim Hull, of the Center for Public Education.

Hull notes that the national graduation rate had hovered around 70 percent between the mid-1970s and early 2000s, making the latest gains in the rate all the more impressive.



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Tax and budget policy expert Martire: 'attainable' solutions on state funding

Two hours prior to Governor Rauner's dire budget address, Ralph Martire, executive director of the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability, presented an alternative approach that conversely offered a complete resolution to Illinois' fiscal mess that would rely on a combination of revenue enhancements and reforms to state policy.



Ralph Martire

Martire opened by cautioning that his entire presentation would be a "rational approach to the budget." In stark contrast to the governor's spending proposal that relies on significant funding cuts, Martire delivered revenue solutions.

"Solutions... are attainable and solvable. We could solve our [budget] problems with a reasonable tax hike of \$4 billion, which is relatively small compared to the \$700 billion Illinois economy," Martire said.

In using a variety of easily relatable graphs and figures to illustrate the budget issues, Martire concluded that the state does not have a tax problem, "Illinois has a revenue problem."

"Our revenue has not grown at the rate of the services we provide, creating a structural imbalance. We need [revenue] levels that support current services," Martire said.

Going over some basic budget figures, he cited around \$3.5 billion in core services cut during the four years the temporary income tax hike was collected. Had the temporary income

tax not been in place, the state would be looking at a \$31 billion deficit. Without the additional funds from expiration of the tax, Illinois will face around \$5 billion in lost revenue over the next two years on top of a \$6.8 billion deficit at the end of the current fiscal year.

Without additional revenues it will be extremely difficult to make the proper investments in what are considered priority programs. Nine out of ten general revenue fund dollars are currently put towards four areas: education (including higher ed. 35%), healthcare (30%), human services (21%), and public safety (5%).

With education being the top funding priority, it is still nowhere near sufficient. Martire cited the current foundation level of \$6,119 as inadequate and more than \$2,500 below the Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB) recommended level needed for a basic quality education in Illinois.

"Even with a low foundation level the state still has failed to pay the full amount," he said.

Martire, who also serves as a school board member in **River Forest SD 90**, matter-of-factly stated how Illinois could get back on sustainable fiscal footing while funding priority services. One suggestion in dealing with increased pension costs was to reamortize the pension debt over time. He said this can be done over a 43-year period.

The data and graphs included in Martire's presentation can be found at <http://www.iasaedu.org/cms/lib07/IL01923163/Centricity/Domain/22/Martire%20handout.pdf>.



Scherer encouraged school leaders to be advocates for their ideas and stressed the importance of using the right vocabulary for your audience.

Supportive Scherer tells how and why to advocate for schools

The table was set for the two-day Alliance Leadership Summit with a presentation by Joseph Scherer, executive director of the Superintendents' National Dialogue.

A former teacher, adjunct professor and associate executive director of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), Scherer is a passionate advocate for public education. His presentation, "School Leaders: Strong Minds Creating a Vision," focused on why it is essential for school leaders to enter the public dialogue on education. He provided specifics about the skills school leaders need to participate in the dialogue in support of Vision 20/20 and how to develop those skills.

Scherer began by quoting pollster Daniel Yankelovich, who said "society generally makes acceptable decisions but is shockingly ill-informed, and public judgment is often based on values and feelings, not knowledge and facts." Scherer noted this can be a big problem for schools because education is a profession that is all about

See **SCHERER** on page 5



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Local school leaders visit lawmakers to push ‘vision’ plan

After listening to Governor Bruce Rauner’s short, somber budget address, school officials who were assembled for the Alliance Leadership Summit boarded buses and headed down the street to the Capitol.

Before leaving they were reminded how important it is to build relationships with their legislators and maintain regular contact.

Armed with Vision 20/20 position papers and other informational materials, board members, superintendents, schools business officials, and principals presented lawmakers with their reasoning for supporting the education blueprint.

They provided a breakdown of the Vision 20/20 policy proposals that will be turned into legislation this year, and explained why the plan is important for the future of Illinois public education.



School officials from **Sauk Village Community Consolidated Schools District 168** distributed Vision 20/20 materials to legislators in the Capitol on the final afternoon of the Leadership Summit.

Roger Eddy, IASB executive director and a former member of the Illinois House, said it is important for school leaders to meet with legislators and discuss their positions.

“It allowed some of them to meet their legislators for the first time and build that initial relationship,” Eddy explained afterwards. “They were able to advocate for the Vision 20/20 policies and then

continue that dialogue back home.”

IASB President Karen Fisher, who brought members of her **Ottawa THSD 140** leadership team, indicated they had constructive conversations with their legislators.

“Our visit was quite productive,” Fisher said. “My group visited with Senator Sue Rezin, who was highly complementary of our Vision 20/20 initiative.

Governor’s new education rep Purvis pledges adequacy, equity in school funding

The keynote speaker at the first day of the Alliance Leadership Summit was scheduled to be Governor Bruce Rauner.



Instead, the new governor sent Elizabeth Purvis, who previously chaired the governor’s transition team on education.

Purvis had been executive director of the Chicago International Charter School for the past ten years,

heading a network of 15 charter school campuses in Chicago and Rockford. Until recently, also, she was an assistant professor of education at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She is now being simply called the education czar pending a more formal title.

Acknowledging she had only been on the new job for a few hours, Purvis read from notes but also made some extemporaneous comments. She said the new administration is aware “education is the gateway to opportunity

SCHERER, from page 4

knowledge and facts.

Strong minds and a focus on ideas are the keys for educators to get their message across in the public arena, he said. The following four points were given as a simple but effective way to change public policy dialogue:

- Stop the practice of largely talking only to yourself and your supporters
- Encourage and support confronting critics rather than simply reacting
- Promote participation in the public dialogue and avoid waiting to be invited
- Incite relevance and shun absence

See **PURVIS** on page 8



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Veteran analysts, journalists review political landscape for public school leader-advocates

Perspective on Governor Bruce Rauner's first month in office, his budget address, pension reform, and school funding reform was provided by three veteran analysts and journalists at the first day of the Alliance Leadership Summit on Feb. 17.

Bernie Schoenburg, political columnist and writer for *The State Journal-Register* in Springfield, opened the discussion of Rauner's first month in office by saying, "He made good outreach moves to legislators. He impressed people from both sides ... and the Springfield community."

"But I'm baffled by the rollout of 'unfair share,'" Schoenburg added, "and I believe some of the goodwill is receding."

Anticipating the release the governor's first budget the next day, panelist Jamey Dunn, executive editor of *Illinois Issues* magazine, said, "We're expecting for schools this will be good news/bad news. Money will come, but with strings attached."

Charles Wheeler III, director of the Public Affairs Reporting program at the University of Illinois Springfield who also spent 24 years as a political writer for the *Chicago Sun-Times*, said, "The ugly reality is that the budget will already be \$5 billion in the hole. [Rauner] could say there's more money for education, but it's just not there."

Regarding the Illinois Supreme Court's ruling on the pension reform law, the panel agreed it would be held unconstitutional. Wheeler, who covered the 1970 state constitutional convention, suggested that a compromise might be in the making: unfunded mandates to public education would go down, but pension costs would shift



(left to right) Bernie Schoenburg, political columnist for Springfield's State Journal Register, Jamey Dunn, executive editor of *Illinois Issues* magazine, and Charlie Wheeler, veteran political reporter and professor at UIS, take questions about the future direction of state government under new leadership.

to school districts.

The panelists spoke on school funding reform in Illinois, noting that Democratic state senator Andy Manar and Republican state senator Jason Barickman were working together on the funding formula issue. Manar's SB16 passed the Senate in 2014 but did not come to a House vote. On Jan. 15, Manar reintroduced the topic in SB1 (now in executive committee) and has since agreed to co-sponsor Barickman's forthcoming plan, announced on Feb 12 as an evidence-based school funding model based on Vision 20/20.

Schoenburg noted that SB16 was designed to fix allocation first and funding second. Until education funding improves, he said that "there are too many contentious issues."

"If the state were in better financial condition, Manar's bill would have passed last year," Wheeler added. "We can't have winners and losers. Everyone wants this, but as long as there are losers, no one will do it."

Tech answer to school shortcomings, argues Apple spokesman Rankin

William Rankin, director of Learning for Apple, Inc., invited his audience to "unleash new dimensions in learning" at the Alliance Leadership Summit on Feb. 17.

Then he said, "That's a lie. These are the same old dimensions in learning."

Rankin promotes innovative teaching and learning for Apple. He previously spent 24 years in higher education as an English professor and education technology



William Rankin

innovator. Unable to travel to Springfield due to winter weather in New England, Rankin appeared via teleconference. But that did not diminish his ability to connect with and capture the attention of the audience of school administrators, board members, business officials, and others. Rankin sprinkled his presentation with memory research, psychology, medieval history, and cognition theory, quite a departure for the otherwise politics-centered Summit.

As we plan for the future of education, Rankin said, we are limited by "expectations of what school is supposed to look like" and our own biases. In the same way the printing press changed learning 500 years ago, technology is changing education today. To re-evaluate learning spaces, he said that we must consider how brains work best: solving problems

See **RANKIN** on page 7



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Top school management executives explain legislation component of 'Vision'

Before Leadership Summit attendees headed over to the state Capitol on Feb. 18, the four executive directors of the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance member associations hosted a discussion on the major policy points included in the Vision 20/20 initiative.

The panel, which included Roger Eddy of the Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB), Brent Clark of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), Jason Leahy of the Illinois Principals Association (IPA), and Michael Jacoby of the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (IASBO), explored the four pillars of the Vision 20/20 proposal. Each speaker presented key



Audience members take notes as the executive directors of the Statewide School Management Alliance break down each of the four pillars of the Vision 20/20 initiative.

information on just one of these pillars, which are the priorities of the initiative.

Director Eddy led off with a discussion of the Vision 20/20 pillar concerning highly effective educators. It

calls for enabling Illinois schools to “recruit and retain high-impact educators,” and “provide relevant professional development.”

See **PANEL EXECES** on page 8

RANKIN from page 6

related to survival, in uncontrolled conditions.

Rankin spoke of unleashing educational creativity through content, community and context.

Defining content as “the stuff [you] have to know,” Rankin explained that the hourglass model of teaching, where fixed information passes from teacher to student, is impossible to sustain. There is too much information to manage efficiently. Students, with all the information at their fingertips, no longer need a teacher-middleman to get it. Instead, they need encouragement and engagement from teachers.

The new model looks more like a cylinder – a community model, with community being “the people we learn with.”

Rankin also shared an electrocardio image of brain waves from a

student volunteer, noting that child’s brain was less active during classroom time than during sleep. “If you want your kids’ brains to be active, let them sleep in class,” he said to a snickering audience. The traditional model of teaching, he said, is passive and disconnected. Rankin encouraged educators to offer productive connections for students by challenging them, creating a participatory culture, and letting each student “bring what they bring and create new.”

In discussing context, Rankin defined it as the physical and cultural space in which learners apply education. He noted that the design team for the soon-to-be-released Apple wrist watch wanted it to be accessible, relevant and personal. Then he questioned, “How can we design edu-

cation like that?”

Rankin noted that such relevance makes rigor possible. Learning by doing is greater than by watching someone else do it, and even that is better than reading about it. “What kids want is a challenge,” Rankin said. “They want ‘hard fun.’ When challenge and skill meet, students are engaged.”

Rankin called the old hourglass model one of delivery and the new cylinder model one of discovery. In the old method, the goal was to be educated. In the 21st century, the goal is to learn. Rankin called on teachers to provide context and community, saying “Content is not the job of teachers anymore.”

“Don’t panic,” Rankin said in closing. “The vision of the future can’t be limited by us.”



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OVERVIEW *from page 1*

tor of the Superintendents' National Dialogue, Elizabeth Purvis, deputy education governor for Gov. Bruce Rauner, and William Rankin, director of learning for Apple, Inc. Panel presentations featured local political analysts and lobbyists from the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance.

In addition to learning how and why local school leaders should advocate on behalf of public education, participants received a variety of tools to craft and deliver their messages to lawmakers at the state capitol. Day two consisted of a presentation on the leg-

islative initiatives in the Vision 20/20 plan and a detailed report on Illinois pension and fiscal policy by Ralph Martire, executive director for the Center for Tax and Budget Accountability.

After lunch and listening to Gov. Rauner's first budget address, local school leaders were sent via school bus to the Capitol, where many visited with lawmakers, aides and other key legislative staff. The day concluded with a legislative reception at the Statehouse Inn.

Armed with Vision 20/20 position papers and other informational materials, participants provided lawmakers with a breakdown of the Vision

20/20 policy proposals to be turned into legislation this year.

IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy said it was important for school leaders to meet with legislators and discuss their positions. "It allowed some of them to meet their legislators for the first time and build that initial relationship," Eddy said. "They were able to advocate for the Vision 20/20 policies and then continue that dialogue back home."

For more from the Summit see IASB Facebook (www.facebook.com/illinoisassociationofschoolboards) and Twitter (twitter.com/llschoobords) accounts.

PANEL EXECES *from page 7*

"The best thing we can do as a state for education is to make sure we have the very best educators in our schools," Eddy said.

Eddy said revamping educator licensing reciprocity agreements with other states is a key policy recommendation. He said legislation is being prepared to remove barriers to such agreements to ensure Illinois districts have access to the best candidates from other states, and to remove career certification for simply sticking around.

Eddy said another Vision 20/20 recommended state policy change

is to expand alternative teacher licensing programs. Ideally teacher candidates without licensure can participate in professional development programs, and teaching programs should recruit well-educated people, then incorporate tailored coursework and offer sound mentorship. Eddy also mentioned student loan forgiveness and new partnerships with higher education institutions, working through advisory councils.

Other included policies are proposals to provide student loan forgiveness for those who enter teaching,

partner with higher education institutions to offer consistent program criteria and experience requirements, expand educator collaboration opportunities, enhance ROE's ability to function as centers for professional development, and fully fund programs for mentoring new educators.

The IPA's Jason Leahy then explained some key policy implications of the Vision 20/20 initiative's view of 21st Century Learning needs. He said an emphasis has to be placed on helping all children learn at their own speed.

PURVIS *from page 5*

and advancement," and the governor wants to support that.

"Governor Rauner's first priority will be adequacy and equity of school funding for all schools," she stated.

Purvis said Vision 20/20 was influential in the final report of her transition subcommittee on education. "Vision 20/20 was shared early in the process with the transition committee and I'm

sure you'll recognize that influence on the final document," she said.

"As stated in the report, the promise of upward mobility is at the heart of the American dream."

Calling the current system "broken," Purvis said the governor wants to change it to ensure high-quality, affordable, well-coordinated, and accessible options for families.

Other initiatives in the first 100 days could include an effort to identify mandates and rules that have highest priority for implementation and those for which schools and districts would most likely seek relief.

To see the full text of her group's final report, she encouraged her audience to visit the website at: makeillinoisgreat.com.

Governor Rauner's message long on ideas, short on details

In his first State of the State address to a joint session of the Illinois General Assembly on Feb. 4, Gov. Bruce Rauner outlined his "Illinois Turnaround" plan to begin a state economic recovery. Presenting a list of potential reforms, the governor did not provide details of his initiatives, but did list some of them before members of both houses of a legislature controlled by the opposite political party.

His list contains provisions for reform of taxation, the business climate, K-12 education and the Illinois Constitution. Highlights include:

- Increase state support for pre-K-12 education;
- Expand access to high-quality early childhood education;
- Launch an effort to increase parent participation in the classroom;
- Give local school boards the ability to modify overly burdensome unfunded mandates;

- Lift the arbitrary cap on public charter schools;
- Reform teacher tenure and incentivize local school districts to reward high-performing administrators and teachers;
- Improve teacher recruitment;
- Eliminate unnecessary testing and institute a rigorous K-12 student growth measure;
- Expand vocational and technical program resources;
- Pass a phased-in minimum wage increase of 25 cents per year for seven years;
- Implement true workers' compensation reform legislation;
- Enact lawsuit reforms to prevent unreasonable "venue shopping" and improve medical malpractice laws;
- Make Illinois unemployment insurance fair for beneficiaries and employers;
- Implement true competitive bid-

ding in public works projects and limit prevailing wage requirements and eliminate project labor agreements;

- Create local employee "empowerment zones" regarding union contracts — where employees may choose whether to join a union;
- Make income taxes low and competitive;
- Freeze property taxes for two years;
- Modernize the sales tax to include service taxes;
- Protect historically accrued state pension benefits for retirees and current workers while moving all current workers into the Tier 2 pension plan and/or a 401K;
- Pursue permanent pension relief through a constitutional amendment

How many of these projects actually make it into the final state budget won't be known before the fiscal plan is adopted in May or later.

Concussion bill eyed to protect student-athletes now and future

With the potential liability for the handling of concussions threatening many high school football programs, an Illinois lawmaker is looking to clarify the process for clearing high school athletes with the injury to return to play.

One bill, SB 7, introduced by Sen. Dan Kotowski (D-Park Ridge) would establish an oversight team for concussions at each school comprising a doctor and at least one athletic trainer, advanced practice nurse, neuropsychologist or physician assistant with expertise in the field.

Oversight team members would be

required to complete continuing education courses about concussions and establish a return-to-play protocol.

"(Concussions) are major concerns that I know families have and school districts have and coaches have," Kotowski told Springfield's *State Journal-Register* for a story published Feb. 7. "So I want to make sure the kids participate and enjoy the opportunity to play the game but also that they are healthy and safe."

Under the bill, a coach would not be allowed to say when an athlete could return. Instead, a doctor would have to clear the student and a par-

ent or guardian would have to sign a consent form after the student is treated.

But Kurt Gibson, associate director of the Illinois High School Association, said he thinks the bill is repetitive since much of it is already IHSA policy.

Kotowski said he filed the bill because he was worried about students who might return to athletics too soon. Concussions can cause epilepsy, memory loss and impaired motor function as well as severe illnesses later in life, including Alzheimer's disease, Parkinson's disease and dementia.

Canvassing reports due back April 28 after board election; last seating date May 5

Tuesday, April 28, is the last day for canvass reports on the results of the April school board election to be sent by county election authorities to school

board secretaries.

Tuesday, May 5, is the last day for school boards to reorganize by seating new members, electing officers and setting a time and place for

regular meetings.

A complete list of dates for the April 7, 2015, election is available online at: <http://www.iasb.com/pdf/ElectionCalendar2015.pdf>.

Mandated board member training (PDLT) on way: Langdon

Since the April 2013 election, IASB has provided Professional Development Leadership Training (PDLT) to more than 2,700 school board members. “And we will renew and redouble our efforts after the April 2015 election,” said Dean Langdon.

As IASB’s associate executive director, Langdon heads up board development and Targeting Achievement through Governance programs for the Association.

Legislation adopted in the spring of 2011, P.A. 97-08 (105 ILCS 5/10-16a), first required mandatory school board member training, known as Professional Development Leadership Training (PDLT).

The Association actively offered the training in a variety of ways, including post-election workshops, the joint annual conference, in-district and online venues.

Board members elected or re-elected in April 2015 will be required to complete the four-hour training

within one year of taking the oath of office, according to statute. That means most board members elected in April 2015 will have until a date in late April or early May in 2016 to complete their mandatory training.

The Association’s online PDLT course has also been very popular, accounting for 843 completions of the mandated state requirements. More information about online training is available at: www.iasb.com/training/onlinelearning.cfm.

WORKSHOPS *from page 1*

- discuss effective board and board member best practices.

Participants who complete both days of the workshop will be automatically admitted to IASB’s LeaderShop Academy Recognition Program.

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. on both days and the workshops begin at 9 a.m. Day one includes coffee in the morning and lunch; Day two includes a continental breakfast and lunch. Day one concludes at 5

p.m. and Day two concludes at 3 p.m.

The cost is \$200 for one day or \$360 for two-day training.

Districts can register by completing and mailing in the registration form attached to the new board member workshops brochure online at <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/newBMworkshops2015.pdf> or by faxing in that completed registration form, or clicking on the “register” link for a chosen workshop online at: www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm.

IASB spring division dinner meetings on way with aid of sponsors

This year’s round of Illinois Association of School Boards’ spring division dinner meetings is sponsored by the following organizations:

Legacy Level sponsors: NaviGate Prepared and WCSIT*ISDA

Millennium Level sponsor: Stifel, Nicolaus & Company, Inc.

Century Level sponsor: First Midstate, Inc. and OpTerra Energy Services

Decade Level sponsor: Kings Financial Consulting Inc.

Division Meeting sponsors: 4QTRS Holdings, Jostens, Larson & Darby Group, Legat Architects, Inc., and Wight & Company.

The IASB sponsorship program provides opportunities for individuals and organizations to provide financial sponsorship to support and enhance all of the division meetings program purposes: board member professional development, networking, peer recognition, association governance and learning about resources available from IASB.

For more information about division meeting sponsorship opportunities, contact Cathy Talbert, associate executive director, field services and policy services, at ext. 1234 or email ctalbert@iasb.com.

Total of 72 state mandate waiver requests filed this fiscal year: report

More than 72 requests for waivers of state mandates were filed this fiscal year through a statutory process IASB was instrumental in creating two decades ago.

Of the 72 requests, 58 still must go to the legislature for approval, but the state superintendent has already approved eight.

Those ok’d are five requests to waive ISBE rules on driver’s education; two pertaining to administration of the Illinois Kindergarten Individ-

ual Development Survey (KIDS), and one on student attendance on the day the ACT is administered.

Others have been withdrawn or returned or need further consideration.

Requirements are listed in an “Overview for Waiver Process” online at: <http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/html/overview.htm>.

For an overview of action on requests since 1995, see the chart at: <http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/pdf/waivermod.pdf>.

Thirty panel ideas being picked by IASB member reviewers from long list

IASB received more than 80 submissions to the “Share the Success” program for the 2014 Joint Annual Conference. Feb. 13 was the deadline to submit ideas for panel sessions at the 2015 Joint Annual Conference.

“The tremendous success of the Conference is largely due to our members across the state sharing with one another their ideas for programs and services to students,” said Executive Director Roger Eddy in reference to the submissions.

From the ideas submitted, 30 panels will be selected to present at the conference in November. Two groups of school board members will review all the panel proposals on March 6, with separate groups meeting in IASB’s Lombard and Springfield offices.

“It is not generally understood that the Share the Success panels are selected by our members at these

meetings, not by staff,” said Dean Langdon, IASB’s associate executive director for board development/TAG. “We are grateful to these board members for their work in reviewing and selecting the submissions.” said Dean Langdon, IASB’s associate executive director for board development/TAG.

Applicants whose submissions are not selected may be offered the opportunity to participate in alternative presentations at the Carousel of Panels, which features round-table discussions offered simultaneously by many local districts.

Share the Success panels will be part of the 100-plus breakout sessions to be featured at this year’s conference. A list of all the chosen panels will be announced soon, followed by a description of panels, workshops and other conference events, which will be posted in early September.

Most school administrators already had cyberbullying policies in place before law

A state law on cyberbullying that took effect on Jan. 1 will not greatly impact Illinois school districts. While it permits schools to punish students for cyberbullying taking place before and after school hours and away from school property, most school administrators say their district already had policies in place for such situations.

The law has been the center of some confusion over recent weeks after it was widely reported that one Illinois school district sent a letter home notifying parents that students could be required to give up passwords to their social media accounts if suspected of cyberbullying.

But experts say there is no provision in the new law that says anything about any authority for schools to obtain access to passwords. The law merely says that should a school

field any allegation of cyberbullying, school officials need to investigate it and create a protocol for looking into it.

The confusion apparently arises from a different Illinois law that went into effect a year earlier, on Jan. 1, 2014. Called The Right to Privacy in the School Setting Act, it was intended to limit administrators’ ability to ask for passwords, but it left open one option for administrators to seek passwords.

“It provides that school officials can’t ask a student for their social network password unless they have reasonable belief that there is something on the (social network) that violates a school rule,” said Brian Schwartz, general counsel for the Illinois Principals Association.

Schwartz said the IPA does not support this law because of this.

NEWS FROM IASB

Bullying policies

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) considers the IASB PRESS policy on bullying in compliance with statutory requirements for a bullying policy. ISBE set April 15, 2015 as the deadline for districts to file their bullying policies with ISBE. Failing to file on time may mean district recognition status could be reduced. For more information, visit: www.iasb.com/law/bullying.cfm.

Bullying is topic

IASB’s newest online learning course, Bullying Prevention: The Board’s Role, covers the school board’s legal responsibility on prevention of, and response to, student-on-student bullying and harassment. Fact scenarios are used to guide participants through the key aspects of their duties. An average learner can expect to spend one to three hours moving through the content and related assignments. Participants may spend 10 to 15 minutes viewing individual scenarios at separate sittings to control the time they spend in the learning activities. Registration is \$50 for IASB members or \$100 for others; five Master Board Member points are available. Click the course registration link online at: www.iasb.com/training/online-learning.cfm.

Community engagement

IASB is pleased to announce a new in-district community engagement workshop, The Board’s Work in Community Engagement, offering professional development, coaching and implementation aid to local school boards wishing to pursue that vitally important work. Based on the IASB publication *Connecting with the Community* (online at www.iasb.com/training/connecting.cfm), it is now available to interested boards. Contact your field services director to learn more.

NEWS HEADLINES

Statewide (Feb. 6, *The Daily Herald*) Nearly 32,000 Illinois school children remain unvaccinated for measles, according to state officials. In the 2013-14 school year, 98.3 percent of school-aged children were immunized for measles, leaving about 31,774 statewide who have been granted an exemption from getting the vaccine or are not in compliance. The numbers come from a yearly report from the Illinois State Board of Education that keeps track of how many school-aged children are immunized and how many get exemptions from the required immunizations. Severe complications can include pneumonia and encephalitis. For every 1,000 children who get measles, one or two will die from it. The Centers for Disease Control recommends all children get two doses of the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine, starting with the first dose at 12 through 15 months of age, and the second dose at 4 through 6 years of age.

Bloomington (Jan. 29, *The Pantagraph*) The Bloomington District 87 school board on Jan. 28 approved \$10 million in bonds of an \$18.3 million plan for fire prevention and safety. Superintendent Barry Reilly said that the bond issue should not result in an increase in the district's overall property tax rate. "The majority of it is for the roof at Bloomington High School," Reilly said. "That will be done over the course of several years." The projects come from a 10-year facilities plan presented in September that identified the district's needs, he said. Besides roof work, the plan includes near-

ly \$12 million in heating, air conditioning and ventilating equipment and controls work.

Danville (Feb. 6, *News-Gazette*) Danville schools officials said Feb. 5 they hope to begin offering free breakfasts and lunches served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast programs to all students, regardless of their household income. The plan would start next school year. Students would still pay for a la carte items. "The exciting thing is this allows students greater access to nutritional meals," Food Service Director Greg Lazzell said. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community Eligibility Program, made possible under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, gives schools that serve predominantly low-income children a new option for meal certification.

DuPage County (Jan. 21, *The Daily Herald*) Non white students are now the new majority in many suburban schools in DuPage County. A freshman class at Elgin High School reflects the school's diversity: About 80 percent of its enrollment comprises nonwhite students. In 1970, 1 out of every 40 residents in DuPage County was a person of color. By 2030, it is projected that minorities will make up the majority of the county's population. The demographics of DuPage, long perceived as affluent and white, accurately illustrate the changing face of Illinois, the suburbs and its students. For the first time this year, non white students outnumber their white counterparts throughout the state.

Petersburg (Feb. 9, *The State Journal-Register*, Springfield) Porta High School in Petersburg has launched a nursing program that provides its students the opportunity to learn skills in a classroom, apply them in a local nursing home and obtain a certified nursing assistant license. Amy McMahon, the school's assistant principal, arranged for the school to become a satellite campus for Lincolnland Technical Education Center, welcoming students from three nearby school districts to attend its CNA, culinary arts and auto mechanics programs. Funding cuts have made sustaining such trade programs difficult. Local organizations helped offset the startup costs as donations and discounts on supplies poured in from area medical facilities.

Statewide (Jan. 27, *The Pantagraph*) The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has received 67 enterprise zones applications, including 10 for new zones. All current enterprise zones will be phased out by July 1, 2016, but the state allowed government entities around the state to submit plans for new zones. A total of 97 will be approved, but only 49 will be approved this year. The remainder will be designated in 2016 through 2020. Many of the applications are from multiple counties or multiple communities to improve their chances. The zones represent a valuable tool for economic development. McLean County's current enterprise zone, for example, is credited with attracting more than \$1 billion in capital investment and thousands of full-time jobs.

ISBE *from page 2*

state board of education. The new chairman was appointed to replace Gery Chico, who had been appointed by Gov. Pat Quinn in 2011; Chico served as chief of staff to former Chicago Mayor

Richard Daley and had previously been Chicago District 299 school board president. Three of the four new members replace former Cairo district superintendent Andrea Brown, former Danville

district superintendent Dave Fields and former Chicago teacher Vinni Hall, whose terms expired in January. The fourth new member fills a long-vacant position.

NSBA conference in March hosting Illinois contingent

The National School Boards Association's 75th Annual Conference to be held March 21-23 in Nashville will feature editor Arianna Huffington, newspaper columnist and founder of Yahoo Tech, David Pogue, and 2014 teacher of the year, Sean McComb.

Staff members set to make presentations include: Reatha Owen, director of field services, and consultant Angie Peifer, who will present a Friday preconference workshop on The Board's Role in Community Engagement. Patrick Rice, director of field services, will present a Saturday panel session on Articulating the Purpose and Need for School Boards. Tom Leahy, executive searches consultant, will be one of several presenters at a Sunday panel on Superintendent Selection: Why You Need to Do it Right.

Meanwhile at the NSBA Delegate Assembly, the Illinois delegates will include: President Karen Fisher, Vice President Phil Pritzker, Immediate Past President Carolyne Brooks, Treasurer Dale Hansen, and **Chicago District 299** representative to the IASB Board, Jesse Ruiz, as well as alternates Rob Luttrell and Ben Anderson.

Representatives from several Illinois school districts are making panel presentations, including the following: **Niles THSD 219**, Skokie; A Taste of

Their Own Medicine: Getting Your School-Based Health Center Up and Running; Presenters: Nanciann Gatta, superintendent; Sheri Doniger, board vice president; and Carlton Evans, board member.

Community Unit School District 300, Algonquin; Five Technology Issues You Need to Know: Protecting Your Board, Staff, and Students from the Top EdTech Legal Risks; Presenters to include Anne Miller, District 300 board president; and attorneys from Franczek Radelet.

Dolton School District 149; Organizing Your District's Financial Future For Greatness: Strategies for Economically Challenged Districts; Presenters: Shelly Davis Jones, superintendent, Alicia Geddis, deputy superintendent and CFO.

Township High School District 214, Arlington Heights; Student Data Privacy and Security in the Digital Age; Presenters to include Keith Bockwoldt, director of technology services, and school technology experts from other states.

Township High School District 214, Arlington Heights; Building the Human Capacity for a Digital Leap; Presenters to include Keith Bockwoldt, director of technology services, and school technology experts from other states.

Maine Township HSD 207, Park Ridge; Presenters: Ken Wallace, superintendent; Barb Dill-Varga, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction.

Schaumburg Community Consolidated School District 54; Teach to Lead; Presenters: Theresa Huber, school board member; Andy DuRoss, superintendent; Nick Meyers, associate superintendent.

Lake Villa CCSD 41; Adlai Stevenson High School District 125, Lincolnshire; Develop a Vision and Make It Work for You; Presenters: Joanne Osmond, CCSD 41 board president and IASB director; Eric Twaddell, District 125 superintendent; and Merv Roberts, District 125 board member and former IASB director.

Leyden CHSD 212, Franklin Park; One-to-One Learning in the Cloud: Three Years of Experience; Presenters: Nick Polyak, superintendent; and Jason Markey, principal.

Dolton School District 149; Using Your Food Service Program to Address Hunger and Obesity for School Aged Children; Presenters: Shelly Davis Jones, superintendent, Alicia Geddis, CFO; April Brown, executive administrative assistant.

The NSBA Annual Conference home page is <http://annualconference.nsba.org/>

NSBA Advocacy Institute yields long, productive lobbying push

The 2015 National School Boards Association's (NSBA) Advocacy Institute, Feb. 1-3 in Washington, included seven school board members and a superintendent from Illinois. The delegation attended two days of sessions on national education issues, and had a long, productive day of lobbying on Capitol Hill.

On Feb. 3 the delegates visited Illinois congressional offices to discuss reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA),

also known as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law, and to advocate for directing all education funding to Title I and IDEA, and maintaining local control. The FRN delegates met with Congressmen Mike Bost, Rodney Davis, Bob Dold, Randy Hultgren, Adam Kinzinger, Peter Roskam, and John Shimkus; and staff from the offices of Congresswomen Tammy Duckworth and Robin Kelly, and Senators Mark Kirk and Richard Durbin.

The delegates told legislators that any funds available for education

should go to Title I and IDEA and not to competitive or specific-issue grant programs.

Since no new funds will be available until the economy improves, delegates said the government needs to look at reducing unfunded mandates and burdensome regulations, like the School Nutrition regulations.

"We learned that House members are confident they will be able to pass ESEA and the Senate is not as confident about a bill passing in their chamber," said IASB President Karen Fisher.

Six countywide sales tax proposals head list of April finance referenda votes

At least five local school finance referendum questions are set to appear on the April 7 primary election ballot. Dozens more school districts would also benefit from six countywide referenda on sales tax propositions earmarked for school facility purposes.

Districts known to be placing local school finance issues before voters in April include:

- **Midland CUSD 7**, Sparland (a \$12.85 million bond issue to build a new elementary school)
- **Champaign CUSD 4** (a \$144 million bond issue for facility upgrades, including a new \$94.5 million high school)
- **Colona SD 190** (seeking a \$1.09 increase per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation in their education fund)
- **North Shore District 112**, Highland Park (a \$150 million bond issue, including new school construction)
- **Triad CUSD 2**, Troy (seeking a 50-cent tax increase in their education fund)

The largest of these finance propositions is at Highland Park, where an additional \$150 million in bond revenue could be obtained if voters approve the proposal. The measure asks voters to endorse borrowing that would mostly fund a school consolidation plan to reconfigure and reduce the district's number of school buildings from 12 to seven. The linchpin of the plan is the construction of a new middle school campus.

Beyond school district propositions, countywide sales tax proposals to benefit schools are scheduled in the following six counties: Carroll, Jersey, Rock Island, Scott, Stephenson, and Perry. Since the state law took effect in January 2008, 30 counties have adopted the 1 percent retailers occupation and service occupation tax.

IASB will report on results of all the April 7 school referenda. Results of school finance referenda since 1989 are available online at: www.iasb.com/elections/finance.cfm.

May 1 economic interest statement deadline looms for board members, other school leaders

State law requires school board members, district superintendents and building principals, and certain school district employees to file annual economic interest statements by May 1 with the clerk of the county where they reside. Such statements should be filed by May 1 unless the individuals required to file have already done so this calendar year (Governmental Ethics Act, 5 ILCS 420/4A-105).

Anyone required to file the statement of economic interests may obtain a 30-day extension, however, by

filing with the county clerk a declaration of intent to defer the filing.

Local district school business officials and certificated administrators are required to file, also, along with: 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.

Individuals required to file who have not received economic interest forms by mail should contact their county clerk to obtain the forms or to obtain additional information.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

March 3 – Blackhawk Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Rock Island

March 3 – Kaskaskia Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Raymond

March 3 – Three Rivers Division Spring Dinner Meeting, PLUS Pre Briefing for Candidates, New Lenox

March 4 – Shawnee Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Anna

March 4 – Central IL Valley Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Creve Coeur

March 5 – Two Rivers Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Liberty

March 5 – Starved Rock Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Granville

March 10 – Northwest Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Freeport

March 11 – Western Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Cuba

March 11 – Lake Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Barrington

March 12 – DuPage Division Spring Dinner Meeting, West Chicago

March 12 – Kishwaukee Division Spring Dinner Meeting, South Elgin

March 17 – Corn Belt Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Bloomington

March 18 – North Cook Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Schaumburg

March 30 – West Cook Division Spring Dinner Meeting plus briefing for candidates, Elmwood Park

March 31 – South Cook Division Spring Dinner Meeting plus briefing for candidates, Flossmoor

For more current information, see www.iasb.com/calendar/