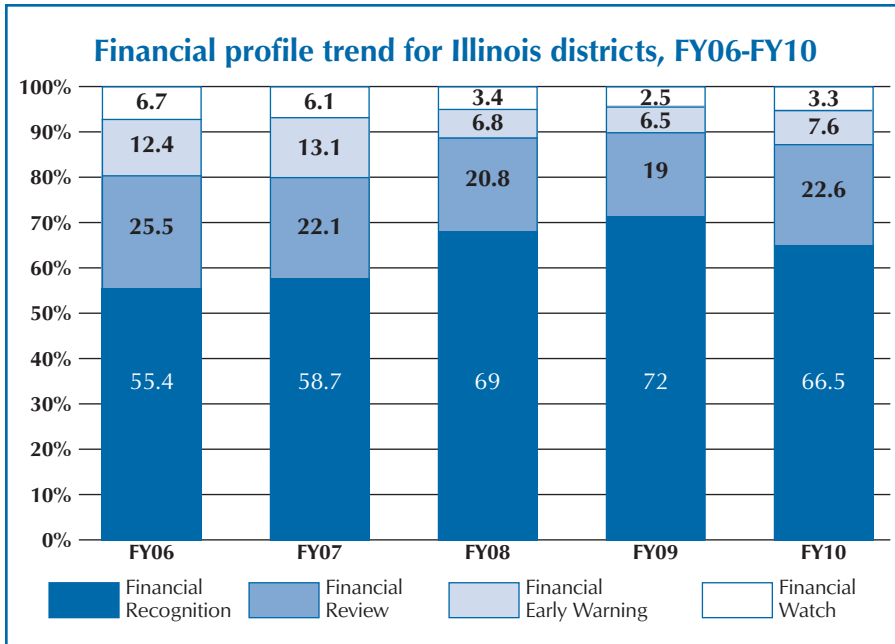


Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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Suit asks courts to reform school funding method it calls 'unfair'

Seeks decree for leaders to create new formula

Two Illinois citizens filed a lawsuit on March 24 against the state charging that its method of funding education is inequitable and unconstitutional, in part because it is based so heavily on an unfair property tax system.

Nearly 65 percent of Illinois public education dollars are obtained through property taxes, yet only 28 percent is contributed from the state's coffers, one of the lowest percentages of state contributions to schools in the country.

The suit was filed in Sangamon County Circuit Court, Springfield, claiming the school funding system violates the state constitution's equal protection clause. A group called Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI), a Chicago advocacy agency, is backing the lawsuit and arguing it with the law firm Sidley Austin, which is advocating pro

Two out of three districts avoiding red ink thus far: ISBE

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) has released its annual financial profile of the state's public schools. And as expected, more districts are falling behind, even as the department revised data to take into account that most districts have not received their full state funding.

The financial profile shows that 578 districts, or 66.5 percent of the

state's 869 public school districts, are doing a sound job managing their finances during this current fiscal crisis. That compares to 72 percent that achieved "Financial Recognition" status in the 2009 report.

"Local school boards are grappling with decreased revenue and late payments from the state," said State Superintendent of Education Christo-

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Ready grant application information, forms on 'i3'

The U.S. Department of Education recently announced final priorities and the grant application for its \$650 million Investing in Innovation Fund, also known as i3.

Individual districts or groups of districts can apply for the i3 grants, which can be used for innovative and evidence-based practices that significantly: improve K-12 achievement and close achievement gaps; decrease dropout rates; increase high school graduation rates; and improve teacher and school leader effectiveness.

The published closing date for applicants is May 11, 2010.

For more information, including the application, visit the U.S. Department of Education's website at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html> or contact Melina Wright at mewright@isbe.net.

Change made in criteria for HealthierUS School program

The HealthierUS School Challenge, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, has modified criteria and is offering financial incentives for schools to join the program. Incentives range from \$500 to \$2,000 at four levels for both elementary and secondary schools.

The purpose of the program is to recognize schools that are creating healthier school environments.

Last fall the USDA provided nearly \$350,000 for two years of funding to the ISBE for the Illinois Team Nutrition Training (TNT) Project, a small portion of which is being used to provide the health incentives. Nationally, the USDA hopes to double the number of award incentives to American public schools. Applications are now being accepted.

Reaction cool to Gov. Quinn's income tax surcharge proposition to bail out schools

In his state budget address on March 10, Gov. Pat Quinn called for a one percentage point state income tax surcharge to fund public education and to prevent massive layoffs of teachers, as well as deep program cuts, and general devastation to Illinois schools.

But Quinn said he would make education a budget priority if the tax surcharge was approved, proposing a modest increase in funding for elementary and secondary education.

To pay for the increase, the governor suggested a combination of income tax increases and budget cuts that he said would help the state pull itself out of a budget hole.

Legislative leaders almost immediately made it clear they do not support the idea. House Speaker Michael Madigan, D-Chicago, said his Democratic majority would not go it alone in support of a tax hike House Republicans continue to oppose.

Later, on public television's "Illinois Lawmakers" program, Madigan explained: "Let's be straightforward about this. The people of America, the people of Illinois, they don't want tax increases. They're hurting."

House Republican Leader Tom Cross, R-Oswego, also indicated that he still has the hammer down on his members who might be amenable to a tax hike.

Senate President John Cullerton, D-Chicago, made it equally clear that the majority Democrats in his chamber would not take the lead on a tax hike. "It's not going to happen," agreed Senate Republican leader Christine Radogno.

IEA President Ken Swanson later commented on Quinn's budget address, saying: "We applaud Governor Quinn's courage in calling for an income tax increase so that we can have quality public education throughout Illinois. Now, it's not a complete answer. HB174 as passed by the Senate last spring is a more comprehensive bill that addresses not just funding

of public education, but the state's structural deficit, and can adequately fund other elements of state government, because we need a solution that doesn't just save our schools, we need a solution that saves our state."

The IEA leaders' views on the tax increase plan were echoed by Illinois Federation of Teachers' (IFT) President Ed Geppert, Jr., who said: "The governor's call for a one percent tax surcharge for education was welcomed, but we all know it is not the ultimate answer to Illinois' urgent fiscal needs. Illinois is facing almost 17,000 layoffs in our schools, skyrocketing tuition at colleges and universities and cuts to important state services. This situation is disgraceful.

Supporters of education in Illinois generally lauded the tax surcharge plan for schools at a time when most state agencies and spending areas were facing deep cuts. "We are appreciative of the governor's leadership in trying to help schools," said Michael D. Johnson, executive director emeritus of IASB.

Johnson added that IASB is not advocating for a specific source of state revenue for education.

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

Illinois Association of School Boards

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James Russell, Associate Executive Director

Gary Adkins, Editor

2921 Baker Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62703-5929
(217) 528-9688

One Imperial Place
1 East 22nd Street, Suite 20
Lombard, Illinois 60148-6120
(630) 629-3776

www.iasb.com



LAWSUIT *from page 1*

bono in the case.

Lawsuits making much the same argument were filed in the 1990s, saying that because property values vary so radically from one district to the next the property tax makes for an inherently inequitable funding mechanism. But those legal actions were dismissed by the courts in deference to “local control” of public schooling.

The new suit argues that stricter state and federal school requirements imposed over the past 10 years have largely removed local control and have undercut that judicial reasoning.

“It is no longer the case that our schools operate primarily within the discretion of local school districts,” argues Hoy McConnell, BPI executive director. “The state has now dictated the standards for educational performance at the local level, and schools are compelled to comply,” McConnell said.

Illinois boasts 867 public school districts and sets minimum per pupil funding levels with specified tax rates for each district. The required level is \$6,119 per student this school year.

The new lawsuit contends some taxpayers in less affluent school districts whose property has lower value must pay a higher tax rate to reach

the minimum funding level than taxpayers in wealthier districts.

The suit calls for the circuit court to declare the school funding system unconstitutional, and to direct the Illinois General Assembly and the governor to devise a fairer approach. It

“It’s not a fact-based case; it’s primarily an issue of law,”

— Alexander Polikoff,
BPI staff counsel.

does not offer specific funding alternatives.

The legal filing notes that the state holds districts to a certain minimum “foundation level” of expenditure, currently set at just more than \$6,000 a student. Even with state contributions, districts where property values are low have to pay a higher tax rate to get to that level.

Ron Newell, a retired teacher living in Cairo, and Paul Carr, a high-school counselor in Chicago Heights, were chosen to serve as plaintiffs in this case precisely to illustrate the current inequity. Property owners in Carr’s district, **Homewood-Flossmoor CHSD 233**, pay a tax rate of 4.1 per-

cent to arrive at \$7,300 a student, while those in the more affluent **New Trier THSD 203**, pay a 1.7 percent rate and still fund more than \$10,600 per student, the lawsuit explains.

Cairo District 1 property owners pay a 6.95 percent tax rate to get to the bare minimum of just over \$6,000 a student, while those in a Rockford-area district, **Scales Mound CUSD 211**, pay 3.3 percent to arrive at more than \$8,000 per student.

“Illinois has one of the most regressive tax systems in the country, thanks to the reliance on property taxes,” said Scott Lassar, a Sidley Austin attorney and former U.S. prosecutor who is handling the case for the plaintiffs.

Supporters say the lawsuit is designed to advance rapidly through the courts. “It’s not a fact-based case; it’s primarily an issue of law,” said Alexander Polikoff, BPI staff counsel.

The suit is unique, as well, in that it seeks no specific remedy. “The complaint does not propose a solution,” Polikoff said. “The court should determine what the remedial response should be.”

Previously Illinois courts have ruled it is largely up to the legislature to determine how to fund public schools.

FINANCIAL *from page 1*

pher A. Koch. “For the past two years schools have been insulated through funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. But next year we lose a billion dollars in funding and we will likely see this trend of increased financial stress continue for districts across the state.”

The Financial Profile is based on data from Fiscal Year 2009, which ended June 30, 2009. The data has been revised to eliminate the impact of payment delays for mandated categoricals such as pupil transportation, special education and other expenditures due to the state and national recession. The school code was amended, effective August 2009 to specifically ensure that districts are not

designated as being in financial difficulty solely due to delayed state payments.

The Financial Profile is a “point in time” picture and it is likely that the financial condition of many districts has changed in the nearly nine months since the end of the prior fiscal year. Currently, the state of Illinois has a backlog of bills totaling more than \$4 billion, of which \$894.2 million are owed to schools. The backlog dates back more than six months. Given the uncertainty of state funding, many school districts have announced major layoffs for the 2010-11 school year.

The 2010 report also shows that more districts are in distress; increasing from 22 districts, or 2.5 percent

in 2008, to 29 districts, or 3.3 percent on the “Financial Watch” list. The rest of the numbers are shown in the accompanying chart.

The Financial Profile is created by using five indicators of financial performance:

- Fund Balance to Revenue Ratio
- Expenditures to Revenues Ratio
- Days Cash on Hand
- Percent of short-term borrowing available
- Percent of long-term debt remaining

The 2010 Financial Profile for all districts in Illinois can be found online at: <http://www.isbe.net/sfms/P/profile.htm>

Economic crisis for schools prompts bills for more leeway

Two bills now alive and advancing in the Illinois General Assembly would permit school districts more leeway in managing their costs in the current economic crisis. Included is legislation to somewhat restrict unfunded mandates, and to allow a four-day school week.

As state budget clouds continued to circle and local districts staggered under the impact of late state payments and uncertain funding prospects for next year, a majority of House members joined together on March 18 to approve legislation that will allow schools to opt out of future unfunded state mandates.

“At a time when the state can’t even pay its current bills to school districts, it makes no sense to add additional expenses to our education institutions, who are already preparing for a financially tough year,” said Rep. James H. Meyer (R., Naperville). “All we are doing with this legislation is saying that if the state doesn’t have the money to fund these programs, then the schools should have the option to prioritize their revenues where they feel they are of best use.”

The mandates legislation, House Bill 4711, sponsored by Rep. Roger L. Eddy (R., Hutsonville), would give school districts the option not to comply with any future statutory or regulatory mandates if the requirements are insufficiently funded by the state. Schools would have to prove they cannot afford the cost of the prospective mandates and official local school board action would have to be taken to opt out of the mandates.

“The bill was considerably watered down in committee,” according to Ben Schwarm, IASB’s associate executive director for advocacy and governmental relations.

The bill’s sponsor agrees: “Because the original concept caused some folks to be concerned that local schools would run right out and do away with all kinds of things that schools should do, I agreed to exempt a number of things from the local school district’s

ability to eliminate certain mandates,” said Rep. Eddy.

“So, I amended the legislation to state that schools could not eliminate special education, transportation, lunch programs, driver education, regulations required by the health/life safety code, curricula associated with the Illinois Learning Standards and State Assessments, teacher certification requirements, programs impacted by federal funding, laws related to teacher tenure or the evaluation, dismissal or reduction in force of the teaching staff, bilingual education and any item that is contained in a locally bargained contract,” Rep. Eddy said.



Eddy

But he insists there are dozens more mandates that are currently either unfunded or underfunded that schools could choose to eliminate.

“This bill will give school districts additional leeway to manage funds in the most effective and efficient manner,” agreed Rep. Myers. “There are a number of well-intentioned school mandates that are passed each year, but without provided funding to implement them, these requirements sim-

ply add another burden to cash-strapped districts. If this measure allows local schools to save enough money to avoid even one layoff, it is certainly worthwhile.”

Likewise, on March 22 the Illinois House voted 81-21 to approve House Bill 4886, allowing for a four-day week in public schools. That measure, sponsored by Danville Republican Rep. Bill Black, would require school boards to have public hearings before implementing such a plan. The measure would also require the State Board of Education to approve the shortened calendar before it could go into effect.

Black said he sponsored the bill at the request of rural **Jamaica CUSD 12** Superintendent Mark Janesky, and his east-central Illinois district, to save money on diesel fuel for buses.

Some rural school districts are at the point where they will not be able to operate their school bus system unless they’re granted some relief by the state, and they’ve been told by the state board not to expect any transportation reimbursement until August or September, Rep. Black said.

He said Superintendent Janesky estimated the district would save 20 percent on diesel fuel and would save money on building energy costs.

Bill signed to delay primary election date until March

Governor Pat Quinn signed legislation on March 11 that returns the date of Illinois’ primary election to March. The change was contained in SB 355, sponsored by Sen. Deanna Demuzio (D-Carlinville).

For school advocates that means the election calendar will now allow roughly six more weeks in even-numbered years to explain public policy questions that school boards place on primary ballots.

State lawmakers voted in 2007 to move the primary from the third Tuesday in March – when it had been held since the 1970s – to the first Tuesday in February. The move, which made the Illinois primary among the ear-

liest in the nation, was made to ensure that the Illinois primary would be relevant in the 2008 presidential contest, and to aid then-presidential candidate Barack Obama.

Supporters of the latest change determined that the combination of Illinois’ winter weather and campaign activity so soon after the holidays led to lower turnout among voters during the February 2010 general primary. The new measure moves the state’s general primary election to the third Tuesday in March of even-numbered years.

Experts say the change will have little impact on elections in odd-numbered years and on school board races.



The Delegate Assembly votes annually on resolutions submitted by member districts to set policy for IASB.

Delegate Assembly resolutions sought to establish direction for Association

There is still time for school boards to submit resolutions for the 2010 Delegate Assembly. Resolution forms are available by calling the Association at extension 1132 or by downloading the form online at: <https://www.iasb.com/pdf/resolutionform2010.pdf>.

Proposals from active member boards may be submitted for: 1) new IASB resolutions; 2) amendments to existing position statements; or 3) reaffirmations of existing position statements; or 4) belief statements.

IASB's annual Delegate Assembly serves as the major policy-setting mechanism of the Association. Each year's assembly consists of delegates chosen by IASB member boards to represent them, with each board entitled to send one delegate. Delegates gather at the Joint Annual Conference to vote on resolutions submitted by member districts in order to establish policy for IASB.

The submission deadline is June 23, 2010. Earlier submission, however, will allow staff to better serve member districts in preparing background material for the resolutions

committee. IASB staff will review each proposal and consult with the sponsoring board representative and/or superintendent.

How does the process work?

A resolutions committee of one member from each of the 21 IASB divisions is elected by each division to review resolution proposals. The committee is empowered to recommend the approval or disapproval of proposed resolutions, and to determine which ones are presented. Appeals to resolutions committee decisions are allowed when submitted in writing at least eight days before the delegate assembly, which is scheduled to meet in November.

IASB sent letters and forms on March 26 to board presidents and superintendents asking for districts to submit resolutions. For information, contact your division representative to the Resolutions Committee (representatives were listed in the March 26 mailing) or phone IASB at ext. 1132. This year's committee was chaired by IASB Vice President Carolyne D. Brooks.

Illinois falls short in first round of 'Race to the Top' fight

Officials vow to re-apply in part two of competition

The U.S. Department of Education recently announced it has chosen Tennessee and Delaware as grant recipients in the first round of the federal "Race to the Top" competition.

Illinois was one of 16 states chosen as a finalist and reportedly finished in the top five for the competitive funding.

"We're obviously disappointed," said Mary Fergus, an Illinois State Board of Education spokesperson. Fergus said the state would examine the reviewers' comments for guidance, and ISBE will resubmit an application for the next round of the funding competition.

The two chosen states will receive an undetermined portion of a \$4.35 billion pot meant to encourage the use of innovative programs to improve student performance. *Education Week* reported on April 2 that \$3.4 billion will remain for round two of Race to Top funding that will be decided in June.

Federal officials announced that only Delaware and Tennessee had won, thanks largely to those two states' ability to apply their reform efforts to every one of their state's students.

U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan said he anticipates that 10 to 15 states will win federal funding in the next round, and applying states will start anew, meaning Illinois' finish this time will not be a factor in the second round.

Officials say a third funding round may be possible, since President Obama has requested an additional \$1.35 billion from Congress for the program.

The funding is part of President Barack Obama's economic stimulus law, which provided \$100 billion for schools nationwide.

Obama urges overhaul of NCLB law, draws fire from teachers

President Barack Obama wants to overhaul the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 under terms of a March 13 proposal to Congress. The plan aims to remove several of NCLB's more controversial federal mandates on schools.

Students would still be tested every year in reading and math under Obama's NCLB overhaul, but scores in other subjects could be used to measure progress, addressing concerns of parents and teachers who say the law has shortchanged the teaching of subjects ranging from the arts and sciences to history and social studies.

The president's proposal would place greater emphasis on academic improvement than the current pass-fail approach to judging schools. If a student were to start the school year's class work three grade levels behind, and improve two grade levels by the end of the year, that would count as improvement. Currently, it counts as a failure because the student still remains behind classmates.

Within President Obama's 41-page blueprint, he notes that his proposal "is not only a plan to renovate a flawed law, but also an outline for a re-envisioned federal role in education."

Obama ran for office as a critic of the NCLB law, and many of his supporters hoped he would scrap it. Teachers' union leaders said they were disappointed by Obama's proposal, saying it places an unfair onus on educators.

Immediately after the plan's release, the National Education Association, the largest teachers' organization in the nation, and the American Federation of Teachers, issued statements saying they were disenchanted with the proposal. Union leaders said the plan places all of the responsibility on teachers and leaves them little authority.

"We had hoped the reauthorization plan wouldn't focus on student test scores," explained Illinois Education Association (IEA) President Ken Swanson. "But we were disap-

pointed."

The president's plan would replace NCLB's annual review of public schools with a new accountability system within four years. The new system would require states to verify by 2020 that all students are on a path toward "college and career readiness," but it would clamp down on the lowest-performing schools as never before.

The new proposal would authorize \$29 billion in federal aid for schools, a 16 percent increase. The additional money would be delivered primarily through competitive grants, rather than through formulas designed to spread it evenly among states.

"Schools that achieve excellence or show real progress will be reward-

"The reauthorization has been delayed far too long and it's good to see this blueprint."

— Mary Fergus, spokeswoman for the Illinois State Board of Education

ed," Obama said in his weekly radio and Internet address, "and local districts will be encouraged to commit to change in schools that are clearly letting their students down."

The president revealed on March 1 that he favors a stringent accountability policy, expressing support for a local decision in Rhode Island that enraged teachers' organizations by firing the staff of a struggling high school. Obama pledged in the Saturday address, however, to treat teachers "like the professionals they are."

Obama's plan "appears to place 100 percent of responsibility on educators and gives them zero percent authority," said Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, after he was briefed by administration officials.

But not everyone was so sanguine about the proposal. State Superintendent Christopher Koch said he was "encouraged by some aspects of the

draft; increased flexibility for states while still maintaining stringent accountability measures, improving federal and local partnerships and a commitment to accurately measuring student progress by using growth models and developing new and better assessments."

Mary Fergus, spokeswoman for the Illinois State Board of Education added, "The reauthorization has been delayed far too long and it's good to see this blueprint." But Agency staff members are still reviewing the proposal, Fergus said.

The No Child Left Behind Act has often been criticized by educators for focusing too much on testing and not enough on learning. Daniel Domenech, executive director of the American Association of School Administrators, said he is glad to see No Child Left Behind go away.

"We're delighted over that," he told the Associated Press. "We have not been a fan of No Child Left Behind."

A year ago President Obama proposed lengthening the school year and instituting higher pay for top teachers as part of an effort to help U.S. students regain an edge in the competitive world economy. Teacher organization leaders responded favorably to the president's remarks at that time, but said working out the details would be crucial in determining their final response to the plan.

A copy of the president's 45-page blueprint for reform is available online at: <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/blueprint/blueprint.pdf>.



"Mr. Edwards, I know that relating to the kids is important, but ..."

NEWS HEADLINES

Belvidere (Mar 16, *Rockford Register Star*) The Belvidere CUSD 100 school board has approved a plan to reassign administrators or merge some positions to save \$250,000. Superintendent Michael Houselog said that among the changes are: eliminating one of two sports directors, and reassigning several new principals and assistant principals. Houselog believes the reorganization uses a pool of administrators in better cost-saving ways to meet student demands. The state is \$2.8 million behind in payments to the district, which expects \$2 million less from Springfield for the 2010-11 school year.

Carpentersville (March 23, *Northwest Herald*) The average class size for District 300 elementary and middle schools could be about 31 students next year, an increase from about 27 last year. Officials said they are facing the real possibility of needing to cut about \$13 million from next year's budget to cope with the state budget crisis. The finance committee met recently to review where the district can find additional cuts on top of about \$4.6 million already approved. The board voted this month to release all first- and second-year teachers who are not in hard-to-fill positions, totaling more than 100 positions. That is the move that would increase class-sizes districtwide, although specifics are being worked out.

DeKalb (March 4, *Daily Chronicle*) DeKalb District 428 is looking to close a budget gap for the 2010-11 academic year that would increase class sizes and reduce staffing. Administrators suggested about \$2.6 million in cuts to the board on March 2. The state is behind on almost \$2 million in payments to District 428. The district, which receives about 27 percent of its funding from the state, is facing a projected budget deficit for next year of \$2.4 million to \$6.4 million. A total of 78 teaching positions

were targeted in Reduction in Force (RIF) announcements this year, but cuts are also being proposed in many school district programs and personnel categories.

Elgin (March 15, *The Daily Herald*) The School District U-46, Elgin, school board approved layoffs on March 15 for 1,037 employees, including 732 full-time teaching positions. Roughly 25 percent of staff in the state's second largest school district expect to be out of a job at the end of the school year. That includes all first-, second- and third-year teachers, as well as tenured teachers across various departments. Along with employees, the cuts will hit students in the 41,000-student district hard next year. With fewer teachers, nurses and librarians, class sizes will soar, and opportunities for sports and the arts will be significantly reduced. The cuts come just a year after U-46 eliminated 348 full-time positions.

Naperville (March 14, *The Daily Herald*) Naperville's community career center is bracing itself for an influx of suddenly unemployed teachers as many area school districts face budget deficits that are resulting in mass teacher dismissals. "We haven't seen an increase in teachers seeking our services here at the Community Career Center," Associate Director Kimberly White said. "However, I do anticipate we will be fielding calls from those finding themselves being let go in the coming days." What can be done to help the large number of dismissed teachers? "I would encourage school districts to look into offering outplacement counseling for their teachers," White said.

Palatine (March 17, *The Daily Herald*) Palatine Twp. District 15 residents have protested a district borrowing plan that could be accomplished without referendum. They have set out to collect 6,300 signatures on petitions – or the

required 10 percent of registered voters in the district – in order to place the district's proposed \$27 million bond sale on the November ballot as a referendum. They had 30 days, or until April 9, to complete the petition drive. Administrators recommending the sale say it locks in low interest rates, allows the district to weather the cash flow challenges ahead, and takes advantage of the cheap construction climate.

Peoria (March 18, *Journal Star*) New federal guidelines requiring Illinois districts to re-identify children's ethnicity and race for next school year are causing some confusion. For the first time, multiple individual races can be selected and Hispanic can be chosen as an ethnicity and not a race.

Pontiac (March 15, *The Pantagraph*) Forty-two Pontiac Elementary School District 429 employees will be laid off and all extracurricular activities will be eliminated next year because the school board recently voted to cut \$2 million from the 2010-11 budget. Fourteen full-time teachers, two part-time teachers, four librarians, 16 teacher's assistants and six custodians will receive reduction-in-force notices. Chorus, band, art and technology programs were eliminated. Sports programs also will be ended, most of which are at the junior high level, including softball, baseball, cross country, girls basketball and boys basketball.

Quincy (March 23, *Herald-Whig*) Schools often have no way to pay for state mandates, said Quincy Superintendent Lonny Lemon. "If you're going to make us do it, then help us fund it," Lemon said. Since 1992, Illinois has passed 105 education bills that have either come with inadequate funding, or no funding at all. Of 74 education bills passed in 2009 alone, 19 were unfunded or underfunded mandates.

June 11 date set for Conference packets mailing to superintendents

Information about the 2010 Joint Annual Conference will be mailed to districts on June 11. This packet will be mailed to district superintendents and will include conference housing and registration forms. It also includes promotional brochures for paid workshops and events at the annual conference, including the Chicago Schools Tour, pre-conference workshops, and the administrative professionals' workshop designed for those who perform the duties of the board secretary.

Information about the conference is also available online at: <https://www.iasb.com/jac10/>. Updates will be posted and announced as they become available.

The conference will be headquartered at the Hyatt Regency Chicago and Sheraton Chicago hotels, with housing available at 10 downtown hotels. This year, IASB has negotiated with all participating hotels to keep housing at 2009 conference rates. (Details about all conference hotels are listed in the accompanying table.)

The rollback was accomplished via a Feb. 22 meeting between the IASB meetings management staff and the block hotel sales representatives.

"This will not only produce a lower room rate for 2010 than previously negotiated, but will reduce all future room rates to be negotiated on the 2010 base rate," explained Patri-

Hotel	Total Room Block
Hyatt Regency Chicago	1,700
Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers	1,000
Doubletree	250
Embassy Suites	300
Fairmont Hotel	448
Intercontinental Hotel	300
Palmer House	500
Marriott Chicago Downtown	600
Swissotel	450
Westin Chicago River North	175
Total 2010 Conference Guestrooms Available for Placement	5,723

cia Culler, IASB assistant to the executive director, and head of the meetings management department.

Even though conference packets will not be mailed until mid June, IASB recommends that school boards pass a resolution in April or May that allows the district to send its school leaders to the conference. This action will enable the district to be prepared to complete and return the conference registration and housing form as quickly as possible after it is received in June.

Housing is assigned daily on a first received, first assigned basis to the hotel indicated on the housing form as the hotel of choice until the room block at the hotel is filled.

To obtain housing, both the completed registration and housing form with a check or credit card to cover the registration fee (\$350 per regis-

trant) and the nonrefundable \$150 per room hotel deposit fee for each individual listed on each of these forms must be forwarded to IASB Meetings Management, 2921 Baker Drive, Springfield, Illinois 62703. Housing will not be processed without the required fees/deposits and conference registration is a requirement for housing placement.

Both the registration and housing checks should be made payable to the Illinois Association of School Boards and returned to the IASB Meetings Management Department in the envelope that will be provided.

When the housing is assigned, a copy of the housing form with the hotel assignment circled and the assignment date indicated, along with the district registration receipt, is mailed to the district superintendent.

When the 1st choice hotel is no longer available, a copy of the housing form, listing the alternate choice hotel which has been assigned for placement and the assignment date, is faxed to the district superintendent.

If the assigned hotel is not acceptable, a fax, stating rejection of the hotel, must be received by IASB no later than five working days from the assignment date. If the hotel is rejected, within the allotted five working days, IASB will return the housing

See **CONFERENCE** on page 9

2010 Conference panel ideas chosen based on relevance, clarity, evidence

All of the 2010 Joint Annual Conference panel ideas proposed by school districts have been evaluated by a panel of IASB board members, with 30 winning proposals chosen from more than 100 topics submitted. The selected school districts were invited through a mailing that went out on April 15. These districts will have the opportunity to present a 90-minute "Share the Success" panel session at the IASB/IASA/IASBO conference, to be held Nov. 19-21 in Chicago.

Districts submitting proposals were asked to describe three learning objectives of their session ("at the end of the session, participants will be able to..."), and to attach a 40-word description. It was also necessary to explain the noteworthy process to be presented, and to provide documentation of its success. Another 50 words or so was required to describe the presentation's benefits for school board members and other conference attendees. Also requested for the proposal was a listing of the skills or insights

the audience may develop or enhance by attending the proposed session.

Proposals were also evaluated on five key points: 1) interest or relevance; 2) clarity and conciseness of the proposal; 3) clarity of objectives and whether they are realistic; 4) evidence whether the presentation will address the appropriate school board role on the chosen topic; and 5) evidence of creativity and an innovative approach.

In the meantime, those proposals that were not selected are still being

See **PANELS** on page 9

School board secretary award again to honor IASB's Holly Jack

The Illinois Association of School Boards invites districts to nominate their local district employee (superintendent's secretary, superintendent's administrative assistant, school board secretary, etc.) who does the work of the school board Secretary for the Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award.

This award was created in 2009 to honor the memory of Holly Jack, a long-time employee of the Association who served as an IASB field serv-



Holly Jack

ices administrative assistant and was instrumental in promoting and developing the secretaries' program that is offered at the annual conference.

The purpose of the award is to both honor Holly's contribution and memory and to recognize the extraordinary work and service provided by secretaries who serve and assist their local boards of education.

The award was presented for the first time in 2009 to Janet Miller, administrative assistant to the superintendent, board secretary and office manager for **Mt. Vernon School District 80** in Mt. Vernon.

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CONFERENCE from page 8

deposit and the district must secure its own housing. If the alternate hotel is not rejected within the five working day timeline, the housing and non-refundable deposit will be forwarded to the alternate hotel for entry and email confirmation directly to the district superintendent.

Once the housing form is forwarded to the assigned hotel for placement, there is no refund of the housing deposit by the hotel for cancelled rooms. The Hyatt Regency and the Sheraton Hotel and Towers, require a Friday/Saturday night stay. If a room at these hotels is cancelled, the district will be billed for a two-night stay,

less the \$150 deposit.

Most hotels require a fee when a guestroom is vacated prior to the originally-scheduled departure date. To avoid this fee, all departure date changes must be made with the placement hotel prior to the arrival date.

Once IASB has forwarded the housing form to the placement hotel all further communication regarding the placed guestrooms is to be directed to the placement hotel.

Questions concerning registration procedures for this year's conference should be directed to IASB Meetings Management at ext. 1115 or 1102; the fax number is 217/241-2144.

PANELS from page 8

considered for presentation at the Carousel of Panels event on Saturday afternoon, Nov. 20. The Carousel allows presenters a chance to make three half-hour presentations on their chosen topic in a period of less than two hours, thus enabling attendees to gather a wide variety of information in a short time.

Districts chosen for that event will be notified by the end of April and have two weeks to confirm their par-

ticipation.

All presenting districts and organizations are responsible for preparing and supplying sufficient number of handouts at their assigned panel times. In addition, they can also submit this information electronically to IASB, which will be post this material on the IASB Members-Only website beginning one week before the Conference. Deadline for receiving the handouts electronically is Nov. 5.

NEWS FROM IASB

May/June Journal looks at place for intelligent design

What is intelligent design? Does it have a place between science and creationism? A Texas author offers information for board members at the same time that controversy swirls about standards adopted by the Texas State Board of Education.

"Gus" offers his own humorous insight into how his district used "intelligent design" to develop new math tests. Read these and much more in the May/June issue of *The Illinois School Board Journal*, coming in early May.

Members-Only site surveys members on NSBA plans

Do you plan to attend the National School Boards Association meeting in Chicago in April? That was one of the survey questions recently posed on IASB's Members-Only website. The largest group of respondents said they plan to attend "all three days" of the national event, and an additional 10 percent plan to attend for one day only.

If you'd like to participate in a survey to help inform IASB and its membership, log onto the site (you will need your email address and your member ID number from any IASB mailing) and take "the survey" at: <http://members.iasb.com/features/>.

Student talent still sought for Joint Annual Conference

The IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference is looking for high schools and middle schools that want to showcase their talented fine arts students, whether in music, art, drama or a compilation of programs.

Selection will be based on both the performance and production quality of the DVD, which should run no longer than 15 minutes.

For more information, go to the IASB website, <http://www.iasb.com/>.

Video walkthroughs a feature of LeaderShop Online Learning Center

Courses said to offer easier board training

Convenience and invaluable content in school board training courses are some of the key advantages of the LeaderShop Online Learning Center. In fact, the center's online courses may be the perfect answer for those board members who would like to learn more about board work without sacrificing a lot of time and energy out of their busy schedules.

The courses offered via the center are designed to complement those made available by the association at in-district, regional and statewide workshops.

Three courses are currently available and more are being developed. Those available now include:

- *School District Labor Relations: What Illinois Law Requires* – a course designed to serve as a foundation for board work and decision-making in collective bargaining and contract management. Completion earns 10 Master Board Member

points and will count as one School Board LeaderShop elective credit.

- *Superintendent Evaluation* – a course designed to help the board and superintendent team turn the superintendent evaluation into a positive process that moves the district toward higher performance and builds team trust. Completion earns 10 Master Board Member points and will count as one School Board LeaderShop elective credit.
- *Media Relations* – a course designed to help board members understand the basic workings of the media and learn how to get educational messages out to the public. Completion of this course earns 5 Master Board Member credits and will count as one School Board LeaderShop elective credit.

How it works

Online registration requires selecting a payment option (by credit card or school district purchase order number). After that, you will get a confirmation by email. The confirmation will include instructions for access-

ing the course and provide an “enrollment key,” which is required so that you can take the specific course requested (keep this information nearby during registration).

Registrants will then be instructed to create an account by choosing a user name and password. A second email will direct you to confirm your new account. You are now ready to take the course, after entering your enrollment key.

Each course features: a welcome message and course overview; a video walk-through (which can be found online at <http://www.onlinelearning.iasb.com/mod/resource/view.php?id=188>); online course policies and agreement (mandatory); the course layout; learning modules containing lessons, quizzes and tests; resources and links; and a course wrap-up that includes credits and a mandatory course evaluation.

The course and all quizzes, tests and course evaluation, should be completed and submitted in order to receive

See **LEARNING** on page 11

AWARD from page 9

To be eligible for the award an individual must be:

- A district employee who does the work of the School Board Secretary, and
- Have been employed in that position, either by your school district or another, for a minimum of 5 years.

In addition, a jury will judge nominees who demonstrate the characteristics similar to those shown by Holly Jack in her work with school districts. These include:

- Excellent Performance – works “above and beyond” expectations, always going the extra mile to serve the district's educational staff, school board, community members, and students.
- Initiative – demonstrates inde-

pendent problem solving ability.

- Innovation – demonstrates imagination in the work environment.
- Staff Development – strives to empower, embrace, and equip colleagues with the knowledge and resources to achieve their personal goals and reach their professional and personal potential.
- Self-Improvement – demonstrates a desire to enhance self-value and excellence.
- Passion – demonstrates a passion for the work and for public education.
- Dedication – devotes time and energy to improve the quality of life for others in the educational community and the quality of education in the district.

The nomination form must be signed by the superintendent *and* the board president. Up to five additional pages may be added and can include letters of support from individuals, either inside or outside the district, may be submitted with the form. The deadline for submitting all documents is Oct. 1.

The winner will be selected by a panel of impartial judges. The selected nominee and the nominating district will be notified immediately of the judges' decision, as will unsuccessful candidates.

More information and the nomination form is available on the IASB website: <https://www.iasb.com/jac10/hollyjack.cfm>. You may also contact Anna Lovern, director, policy services, 217-528-9688, ext 1125, email address alovern@iasb.com.

High school conference speakers to feature three expert authors

Organizers have announced that featured speakers for the fourth annual High School Conference, June 14 and 15, at the Doubletree Hotel in Bloomington will include the following writers:

- Karin Chenoweth, author of *How It's Being Done: Urgent Lessons from Unexpected Schools*
- Matthew B. Crawford, author of *Shop Class as Soul Craft: An Inquiry Into the Value of Work*
- Jim Wright, author of *RTI Toolkit: A Practical Guide for Schools*

The Coalition for Illinois High Schools is asking high school education leaders to mark their calendars to plan to attend the event. Centering on the theme "Promoting Student Success: A Variety of Approaches," this conference is designed for all those involved with and interested in the work of Illinois high schools. School leaders are encouraged to bring a district leadership team.



Conference breakout session strands will include: national, state and local initiatives, curriculum and instruction, and tools and technology.

This annual event is presented by the Coalition for Illinois High Schools. In addition to the Illinois Association of School Boards, the Coalition includes the: Illinois Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, Illinois Federation of Teachers, and the Illinois High School Association.

The registration cost for the full conference is \$180 and \$100 for a single day. Registration for the conference is now open. To register, download and complete the registration form online at: <http://www.cfihs.net/pdfs/ConferenceRegistration2010.pdf>

For questions, call 309/663-6377 or email tcraig@ihsa.org.

More information about the conference will soon be available online at: <http://www.cfihs.net/>.

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2010 ANNUAL HIGH SCHOOL CHALLENGE CONFERENCE - JUNE 14-15

WELCOME

The Coalition for Illinois High Schools is a not-for-profit corporation organized under the laws of the State of Illinois. This web site has been created to promote our organization, purposes, and activities.


Upcoming Events:

- Meeting – 9:30 AM May 6, 2010 IHSA offices in Bloomington.
- Annual Conference – June 14-15, 2010 Doubletree Hotel in Bloomington.
- Summer Retreat – July 26-27, 2010 in Bloomington.

MISSION: The mission of the Coalition is to utilize its collective strength and influence to foster and support effective and innovative practices to improve learning for all high school students.

PURPOSE: The purpose of the Coalition shall be to promote and support the educational needs of the students, faculty members, staff, family and associates of Illinois high schools with educational, informational, and professional ideological support.

OBJECTIVES: The objectives of the Coalition are to enrich and enhance educational opportunities for students of Illinois high schools by providing a forum for sharing of effective practices and innovation, by providing informational and practical support, and by providing a forum for discussion and reflection.



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IASB is a charter member of the Coalition for Illinois High Schools, which is presenting this year's High School Conference on June 14 and 15.

LEARNING from page 10

IASB LeaderShop credit. Although there's no time limit for completing a course, participants are encouraged to save their work every time they leave the course.

For those who wish to continue working without online access, a print module is also available. By clicking on this link, participants can download and print their course material to read or study away from the computer.

LeaderShop credits will be given out on completion of all quizzes, tests and the course evaluation. For credit a passing "grade" of at least 80 percent is required. LeaderShop Academy credits are assigned automatically to member database records upon completion of the course evaluation.

Members completing each course should add their Master Board Member credits when they report that data in July.

Credits for both programs can be

monitored at IASB's Members-Only website: <http://members.iasb.com>.

Tuition ranges from \$75 to \$100 per course. Participants earn both LeaderShop Academy and Master Board Member credit for every course completed and passed.

To get started, visit online at: http://www.iasb.com/training/online-learning_courses.cfm

Then simply choose your course and proceed to registration. Payment options allow members to pay either by purchase order or credit cards. Board members are advised to check first with their school district policy manual to assure that their board policy permits payment or reimbursement for such professional development.

For more information or if you have questions about IASB's LeaderShop Online Learning Center, contact: onlinelearning@iasb.com, or Sandra Kwasa, board development consultant, at ext. 1213.

EEE environmental design award entries sought for top school building projects

Are you particularly proud of a new building or renovation in your school district? Then why not help the architect or other design professional responsible earn recognition and awards in the 2010 Exhibition of Educational Environments (EEE)?

The annual EEE awards program is sponsored by IASB Service Associates, a special arm of the Association comprising firms that have an exemplary record of providing quality products and services to schools.

Award entries are being sought from firms engaged in any aspect of designing public school facilities. The facilities may be intended for instructional, recreational, administrative or other use, but construction must be completed in time for occupancy with the start of school in the fall of 2010.

Entries are due in IASB offices by July 23, and must be made by — or with the written permission of — the author/owner of the project design documents. Each entrant is limited to no more than two project entries per year, and no project may be entered more than once. There is a \$250 fee for each entry (maximum of two entries).

A total of 26 projects were chosen for the competition last year and were placed on display during the Joint Annu-

al Conference. A list of the 2009 award winners can be viewed at: <https://www.iasb.com/jac09/eee.cfm>.

Plans call for preliminary materials to be submitted by Sep. 13 and evaluated on Sep. 16. The judging will be done in Springfield on a blind basis by a jury of three school board members or administrators and three architects, all appointed by IASB and experienced in school facilities or design.

Criteria include suitability for stated requirements, functional relationships, aesthetics, grade level or departmental organization, flexibility, expansibility, compatibility with external environment, uses of new technology, barrier free accessibility, energy efficiency, environmental controls, site adaptation, vehicle and pedestrian circulation, activity area groupings, security and building orientation.

All awards will be announced at the conference, with awards of distinction to be featured and presented at the first general session. All entries chosen by the jury will be displayed all three days of the conference, Nov. 19-21, next to the conference bookstore.

Entry flyers will be mailed in June. For more information, contact IASB's Dana Heckrodt, ext. 1131.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

May 21-22 – IASB Board of Directors' Meeting, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield

May 26 – Southwestern Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville

June 3 – Two Rivers Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Lonzerotti's, Jacksonville

June 14-15 – Illinois High School Challenge Conference, Doubletree Hotel, Bloomington

June 23 – South Cook Executive/Governing Board Meeting, Rich Central High School

June 24 – West Cook Executive Committee and Governing Board Meeting, Leyden High School, Franklin Park

June 29 – Three Rivers Division Executive Committee & Governing Board Meeting, Prairie Bluff Golf Club, Lockport

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