

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

April 2013 / Issue No. 730

Association consortium to offer comprehensive health insurance

The Illinois Association of School Boards, along with the Illinois Association of School Administrators and the Illinois Association of School Business Officials have developed a consortium to offer a proprietary, full-insured, comprehensive group health insurance plan to member school districts.

The plan, which will be sold and serviced by the Illinois Schools Employee Benefits Consortium (ISEBC), is designed to give districts another option for providing employees health benefits at affordable prices.

"This plan offers our member districts greater purchasing power and more stability in premium increases," said IASA Executive Director Brent Clark in announcing the initiative. "This is a unique opportunity to purchase employee benefits and receive a premium discounting previously available only to the largest employers.

"We are extremely pleased to be able to offer this unique service to our



members at a time when school districts and employees are in need of cost-saving options that provide quality care," Clark added.

IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy said the partnership is the best way to do business in this economic climate.

"Employee health care is one of the most significant costs associated with employee benefits," Eddy said. "It certainly is the type of collaboration that makes sense. In fact, this type of collaboration is one of the expectations laid out by the state's Classrooms First Commission. We are pleased to join IASA and Illinois ASBO to offer this opportunity to our members."

Illinois ASBO Executive Director Michael Jacoby said the plan should

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Momentum builds for pension reform in state legislature

Pension reform was on the front burner in the Capitol in March. Both the Illinois House of Representatives and Senate took significant action on various pieces of legislation regarding public pensions. The momentum for final passage of a pension reform measure continued to build right up to the point where the legislature took a two-week spring break.

Both chambers planned to return to the Capitol the week of April 8.

The Illinois House of Representatives approved several individual bills each of which contains a piece of the pension reform puzzle:

- HB 1165 (Madigan) would limit the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) by freezing the COLA until five years after retirement, or age 67. Then the COLA would be a flat 3% of the first \$25,000 of

See **PENSION** on page 8

Joint Annual Conference keynote speakers to discuss technology, honor flights

Featured speakers for the 2013 Joint Annual Conference, to be held Nov. 22-24 in Chicago, have been announced. They include:

Friday, First General Session

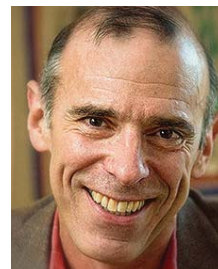
David Warlick is a 35 year educator. He has been a classroom teacher, district administrator and staff con-

sultant with the North Carolina State Department of Public Instruction. For the past 15 years, he has operated The

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David Warlick



Tony Wagner



Erwin (Earl) Morse

Wellness conference set

Registration is now open for the sixth annual School Wellness Conference, set for May 3 at the Hilton in Springfield. It is jointly presented by Action for Healthy Kids (ADHK) and the ISBE. Registration, which includes lunch, costs \$45 per participant before April 19. The fee is \$55 after that date. For more information, go to <http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/pdf/wellness-conf13.pdf>. Registration is available at <http://goo.gl/2N2z2>. More information is available from Joan Love at 800/545-7892 or jlove@isbe.net.

Transportation budget tool

District budget planners now can determine how their schools would be impacted by the governor's proposed FY 14 transportation cuts. The proposed \$145.6 million reduction to that budget line item would leave a \$60.1 million appropriation. A new reimbursement estimation tool is available showing a side-by-side comparison of the State Board of Education's recommendation and the governor's proposal, online at http://www.isbe.net/budget/FY14/FY14_budget_compare_gov.pdf.

KIDS piloted

Adopted in 2012, the Kindergarten Individual Development Survey (KIDS) is a comprehensive process to assess students' growth and development and boost effectiveness of classroom instruction. Starting this school year, 64 districts participated in the KIDS pilot and received training on how to implement KIDS in kindergarten classrooms. KIDS will continue as a pilot among volunteer districts until it is implemented statewide in 2015-16. To take part, contact the Division of Early Childhood at 217/524-4835. To learn more, log on at <http://www.isbe.net/KIDS>.

Governor's budget aims to cut transportation funding, state prorate its share to 19 percent

After three years of living with significant cuts in funding in the school district transportation reimbursement, the state's formula may be significantly altered, if the governor has his way.

Gov. Pat Quinn's budget proposal includes an estimated \$400 million in cuts to public education, including about \$150 million in general state aid for local schools and another \$145 million in transportation funding.

In response, some school districts are again formulating options this year for reducing the number of bus routes they run.

For nearly 100 years, community unit districts have been mandated to provide school busing. But new districts, such as charter districts and magnet districts, are not required to do so. Still, most districts do offer transportation because the parents and communities want it to reduce traffic congestion and to increase child safety.

In the governor's budget, the regular transportation reimbursement line item would be prorated at 19 percent. Last year it took minimal cuts after Quinn cut the line item in both FY '11 and FY '12.

District officials anticipated cuts in general state aid, but many said they were blindsided by the proposed reductions in transportation.

The **Meridian CUSD 15** budget, for example is already lean, meaning the proposed transportation cuts would hurt more. The cut in transportation funds could cost the district as much as \$200,000, Superintendent Frank Meyer said. He said this is an example of the state requiring districts to provide services without helping them pay for those requirements.

"In general, unfunded mandates are always an issue. So many of those may not be that expensive (individually) but added together, it becomes significant money. I think for most of us, our biggest problem is that the revenue stream hasn't kept pace with expenditures and cuts by the state

board," Meyer told the *Decatur Herald and Review* in a story published March 23.

Many districts receive a significant amount of transportation aid. Districts that are geographically larger and more rural qualify for a good amount of aid because significant shares of their students live more than 1.5 miles from their schools.

Geneseo CUSD 228, for instance, covers 265 square miles.

"We're already at [nearly] 75 percent pro-ration, they're going to drop that down all the way to 19 cents on the dollar," says Superintendent Scott Kuffel. He says that is "devastating."

Geneseo pays \$1.5 million to bus students to class. The proposed cut would mean a loss of \$775,000. Without that, bus money will have to come from other parts of the district's budget, Kuffel said.

The state has made cuts to transportation funding the past several years, and, unlike the recent cuts to general state aid, state legislators have said little about these proposed cuts.

Many districts already operate their transportation budgets at a deficit,

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**Illinois Association
of School Boards**

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**ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

27 tax and bond propositions, 17 county sales tax plans on ballot

13 bond issues voted and 14 tax proposals

Local school districts placed at least 27 property tax and bond proposals on the April 9 consolidated election ballot. Included were 14 property tax and 13 bond propositions questions. Also before voters in this election were 17 county-wide sales tax hike propositions.

Tax increase propositions on school district ballots ranged from a low of 49 cents additional tax per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation in **O'Fallon CCSD 90** to a high of \$2.39 additional tax per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation in **Pembroke CCSD 259**, Hopkins Park. Tax proposals being put to a vote included the following 14 referendum questions:

Shall the debt service extension base under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) for **Auburn CUSD 10**, Sangamon and Montgomery Counties, for payment of principal and interest on limited bonds be increased from \$144,087.55 to \$1 million for the 2013 levy year and all subsequent levy years, such debt service extension base to be increased each year by the lesser of 5% or the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index during the 12 month calendar year preceding the levy year?

- Shall the limiting rate under the PTELL for **Giant City CCSD 130**, Carbondale, in Jackson and Williamson Counties, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.85% above the limiting rate for any purpose of the school district for levy year 2011? This would be equal to 3.37285% of the equalized assessed value of taxable property for levy year 2012.
- Shall the maximum rate for the tax levied for educational purposes by **Grant CCSD 110**, Fairview Heights, in St. Clair County, be increased by 0.85 percent? The total would increase from the current rate of 1.42 percent to a rate not to exceed 2.27 percent on the value of tax-

able property in the district. This would allow for an increase of 9% over the current budget.

- Shall the limiting rate under the PTELL for **Itasca District 10**, in DuPage County, be increased by an additional 0.8466% above the limiting rate for levy year 2011 and be equal to 2.7523% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2013? This would raise nearly \$4.4 million in additional revenue for the district and taxpayers would pay an added \$282.20 on a \$100,000 single-family home.
- Shall the maximum annual tax rate for educational purposes of **Leland CUSD 1**, LaSalle and DeKalb Counties, be increased to 4.0 percent on all the taxable property of the district, instead of 3.25 percent?
- Shall the limiting rate under the PTELL for **McClellan CCSD 12**, Mt. Vernon, in Jefferson County, be increased by 0.99% above the limiting rate for any purpose of the district for levy year 2011? This would establish the limiting rate at 3.20763% of the equalized assessed value of all taxable property for levy year 2013.
- Shall the maximum annual tax rate for educational purposes of **Meridian CUSD 223**, Stillman Valley, in Ogle and Winnebago Counties, be increased to 3.85 percent, instead of 2.78 percent, the present maximum?



School referendum propositions drew strong responses from voters in many Illinois neighborhoods this spring.

- Shall the extension limitation under the PTELL for **Millburn CCSD 24**, Wadsworth, in Lake County, be increased from the lesser of 5% or the percentage increase in the annual Consumer Price Index to 12%? This would require taxpayers to pay an added \$114 on a \$100,000 single-family home.
- Shall the maximum annual tax rate for educational purposes of **Nauvoo-Colusa CUSD 325**, Nauvoo, in Hancock County, be increased to 2.55 percent on all of the taxable property of the district, instead of the current rate of 2.00 percent?
- Shall the maximum annual tax rate for educational purposes of **O'Fallon CCSD 90**, in St. Clair County, be increased and established at 1.89 percent on all the taxable property of the district, instead of 1.40 percent, the present maximum rate? This would raise just over \$3 million in additional revenue for the district.

See **REFERENDA** on page 7

Schools eye key deadlines after board election

Two key election deadlines follow the April 9 school board balloting:

Tuesday, April 30, is the last day for the county clerk or board of election commissioners to canvass the April election results. (10 ILCS 5/22-17)

Tuesday, May 7, is the last day for the school board to reorganize by seating new members, electing officers and

setting a time and place for regular meetings. (10 ILCS 10-5 and 10-16)

A complete list of remaining dates and deadlines related to the April 9, 2013, election is available online at: <http://www.iasb.com/pdf/13electioncalendar.pdf>. Local election officials can also find help at: <http://www.elections.state.il.us/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/2013LEOBook.pdf>.

Nominees sought for fifth annual Holly Jack board secretary award

The Illinois Association of School Boards once again is seeking nominations 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 services administrative assistant and was instrumental in promoting and developing the secretaries' program that is offered at the Joint Annual Conference.



Debra Williams

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 will be presented at the IASB/IASA/IASBO annual conference in Chicago on Friday, Nov. 22.

IASB invites school board presidents and superintendents to nominate their local district employee who does the work required of the school board secretary by *The School Code* of Illinois.

To be eligible an individual must

be a district employee, and have been employed in that position, either by their school district or another, for a minimum of five years.

While it is not necessary to address each of the criteria listed below, the nominee should demonstrate the characteristics similar to those shown by Holly Jack in her work with districts.

- Performance - Performs "above and beyond" expectations, always going the extra mile to serve the district.
- Initiative - Demonstrates independent 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 goals.
- 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 community and of education in the district.

The nomination form must be signed by the superintendent and the board president. Additional pages may be added. Letters of support from individuals, either inside or outside the district, may be submitted with the form, but those must be limited to a total of five. The deadline for submitting all documents is Sep. 27.

Nomination forms are available online at: <http://iasb.com/jac13/pdfs/HollyJackAward2013.pdf>

The winner will be selected by a panel of impartial judges.

Past winners

The first award was made in 2009. The list of winners to date includes:

- 2009, Janet Miller, **Mt. Vernon ESD 80**
- 2010, Mary Ellen McElligott, **Marquardt District 15**, Glendale Heights
- 2011, Dottie Crews, **CUSD 16**, New Berlin
- 2012, Debra Williams, **Arlington Heights School District 25**

For more information contact Judy Williams, ext. 1103, or email her at jwilliams@iasb.com, or Anna Lovern, ext. 1125, or email her at alovern@iasb.com.

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Landmark Project, a consulting and innovations firm in Raleigh, N.C.

His attribution web site, Citation Machine, serves nearly a million page views a day and his classroom blogging service has served more than a quarter of a million teachers and students. He is also the author of four books about instructional technology and contemporary literacy.

Warlick also worked for 10 years as a middle school social studies, math and science teacher.

Saturday, Second General Session

Tony Wagner recently was named the first Innovation Education Fellow at the Technology & Entrepreneurship Center at Harvard University,

Cambridge, MA. He was previously the founder and co-director of the Change Leadership Group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education for over a decade.

Wagner consults widely to schools, districts and foundations. His previous work experience includes 12 years as a teacher, principal, university professor in education, and founding executive director of Educators for Social Responsibility. He is also the author of five books.

Sunday, Third General Session

Erwin (Earl) Morse, a retired U.S. Air Force captain, is the co-founder of the Honor Flights Network. Morse began his 21-year military career in 1977 as a flight medic. Later assignments

took him to various parts of the U.S., and finally to Incirlik Air Base, Turkey, where he was accepted into the physician assistant training program.

After retiring, Morse worked at a V.A. clinic in Ohio where about 300 of his patients were World War II veterans. He eventually recruited fellow pilots to begin flying elderly, disadvantaged patients to Washington, DC, to visit the WWII Memorial, which was completed in 2004.

His leadership later led to his co-founding of the Honor Flights Network, a national program committed to flying veterans for free to visit their memorials. The program has served nearly 100,000 veterans and currently operates from 121 hubs across the country.

Association a state-approved provider of mandatory board member training

IASB now is an approved provider of all state-mandated school board member training, a part of Illinois education reform,” according to Angie Peifer, Associate Executive Director for Board Development/TAG. IASB has received notification that it has been approved by the Illinois State Board of Education to provide PERA Training for school board members. The IASB is already named in law as an approved provider of the 4-hour mandated Professional Development Leadership Training.

State law requires any school board member either appointed or elected after June 13, 2011 to complete the four-hour Professional Development Leadership Training within the first year of his or her first term. This training is required to cover the topics of educational and labor law, financial oversight and accountability and fiduciary responsibility.

In addition, a board member is required to complete training on the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) in order to vote on whether to retain or dismiss a teacher when the district uses the expedited process

called Optional Alternative Evaluation Dismissal.

Few districts will need this training prior to 2016. All important aspects of PERA and education reform are explained in the free online overview “PERA Overview for School Board Members” on this IASB website: <http://iasb.com/law/PERAoverview.pdf>.

PERA training for school board members will be included in all of the IASB’s Professional Development Leadership Training being conducted in May and June of 2013. (See <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/nbmworkshop-brochure2013.pdf> for dates and locations.) This will also be incorporated into the online version of this training beginning in early April, 2013, and as a stand-alone online course later this spring. Visit IASB Online Learning Center (http://iasb.com/training/onlinelearning_courses.cfm#LTBM) for more information.

IASB is also an approved provider for mandatory training on the Open Meetings Act. Each board member taking office after January 1, 2012 must complete this training within 90 days after taking the oath of office.

Member districts invited to submit resolutions from now to June 19 to guide association course

Local school boards are invited to submit resolutions for IASB’s 2013 Delegate Assembly. Information and resolution forms were mailed to district superintendents and board presidents April 1.

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 district resolutions.

Proposals from active member boards may be submitted for new IASB resolutions, amendments, reaffirma-

tions, or belief statements.

The deadline to submit resolutions is June 19.

Once all resolutions are in, a committee with one member from each division will recommend which ones should be presented. This year’s committee, chaired by IASB Vice President Karen Fisher, will meet on Aug. 2.

Appeals are allowed in writing at least eight days before the Assembly, which this year will be Nov. 23.

For more information, contact division representatives to the resolutions committee listed in the mailing, or phone IASB’s Connie Crowder at ext. 1132. Resolution forms will also be posted on the IASB website.

NEWS FROM IASB

Training starts May 10

Regional workshops for new board member training and mandatory board training are scheduled at 12 select locations from May 10 to June 22. The brochure is online at: <http://iasb.com/calendar/nbmworkshopbrochure2013.pdf>. The workshops are offered as the one-day mandatory training on Fridays, and one-day Basics of Governance workshops on Saturdays, and as two-day New Board Member Boot Camps on Fridays and Saturdays. Details are available at: <http://iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm>.

Starting Right

For districts seating new board members after the April election, IASB now offers something new, a booklet called *The School Board in Action: Seating New Board Members & Organizing the Board*. It’s online at: <http://www.iasb.com/pdf/OrganizingBoard.pdf>. IASB staff also can respond to requests for “new team” workshops in local districts, called “Starting Right: Board-Building for the New Governance Team.”

Division governing meetings

Some IASB divisions hold spring division governing meetings. All division board members and superintendents are invited to attend. Beginning April 25 and concluding June 19, the meetings maintain association governance and determine board development programming topics for the fall 2013 and spring 2014 division dinner meetings. “All educational programming for fall and winter/spring division meetings is locally determined,” said Cathy Talbert, IASB associate executive director. “Some divisions delegate this to an elected executive committee, others discuss and determine topics of interest at governing meetings.” Governing meetings are listed at <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/>.

HEALTH *from page 1*

help participating school districts struggling to balance their budgets. “As healthcare costs continue to rise, districts truly need a program like this,” Jacoby said.

UnitedHealthcare®, one of the nation’s leading benefits providers, will underwrite this program. The customizable benefits package includes:

- Flexibility with deductibles: A district has the option to completely customize their own plan or choose a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) with deductible amounts of \$500, \$1,000, \$2,000 or \$3,000, or a Health Savings Account (HSA) with deductibles of \$1,500, \$2,500 or \$5,000, giving employees complete flexibility based on their needs. For districts that self-insure a portion of the deductible, this plan will accommodate that option, too. As many as six health plan options can be selected per district.
- Flexibility with coverage: In addition to single and family coverage, the group plan also offers employee-and-spouse-only coverage or employee-and-child/children-only coverage.
- Life insurance coverage: Each employee may have \$10,000 of life insurance with matching \$10,000 accidental death and dismemberment coverage. Districts may elect to increase the amount of coverage for all employees up to three times the employee’s base annual earnings, up to a maximum of \$250,000.
- Short-Term Disability (STD) and Long-Term Disability (LTD) coverage: The group plan offers both STD and LTD benefits, noting that the carrier will ensure that specialized resources and support remain in place to help the employee return to work as soon as safely possible.
- Dental coverage: The plan offers a “passive” PPO dental option that provides the savings of a PPO plan with the freedom to see any dentist. The plan provides a \$1,500 annual maximum and a \$1,500 lifetime orthodontic maximum for children.
- Vision care coverage: Standard vision coverage is included in all medical plan options, with routine eye exams covered and co-pays and discounts on materials. In addition, a district may elect to offer one of two more robust vision plans tailored for employees.
- Out-of-state coverage: UnitedHealthcare® has an extensive national and international health care network.
- Early retirement option: Any active employee within an ISEBC school district and is at least age 55 is eligible to stay on a plan until they reach Medicare age.
- No-balance billing: All of the PPO options have a \$20, \$25 or \$30 co-pay and “no balance billing” – the in-network provider agreement to accept claim payment from Unit-

edHealthcare® as payment in full for their services.

- Other specialized services: Coverage also includes routine exams, “well-child” services, chiropractic care, outpatient services, and prescription drugs.
- Cafeteria plan: The plan allows participating districts to set up a “cafeteria plan” that fits the needs of employees and allows them to have online access to their Flexible Spending Account (FSA) 24/7 and gives each employee their own debit card.
- COBRA administration: In keeping with the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), ISEBC will offer employees and their families the opportunity to purchase continuation of coverage under certain circumstances when they leave employment.
- Health care reform compliance: ISEBC will help participating districts to meet their compliance obligations by keeping them up to date on reform regulations that affect employee benefit programs and tax implications.

Another feature of the ISEBC program that is different from some health insurance pools or consortiums is that there is no exit fee if a school district decides to withdraw from the program.

For more information, districts are directed to contact Stan Travelstead at stan@iasaedu.org or Jeremy Travelstead at jeremy@iasaedu.org, or call 877-698-2247.

TRANSPORTATION *from page 2*

spending much more than their revenue every year, and in some cases drawing from reserves.

The legislature, meanwhile, is considering increasing the transportation requirement to apply to those living up to two miles from school.

Over the past three years, the governor and legislature have cut the transportation payments to a 74 percent proration level. As a result, some districts were forced to cut bus routes.

One other option considered in some districts is outsourcing bus services to try to save money. Some, including **Palatine District 15**, have begun sending out Reduction in Force [RIF] notices to bus drivers, bus driver assistants and secretaries.

The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance is included in transportation reimbursement discussions in Springfield.

“We should take a long, hard look at any such proposals before mak-

ing any legislative change,” said IASB Deputy Executive Director Ben Schwarm. “School board members will first take into account the safety and well-being of the students. And reducing bus routes, requiring parents to drive their children to school, and charging for student transportation may not be in the best interest of the students, parents, and members of the community. The state will just have to pay for some things,” Schwarm said.

- Shall the annual tax rate for the education purposes of **Pembroke CCSD 259**, Hopkins Park, in Kankakee and Iroquois Counties, for tax years 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 only, be increased from 1.11% to 3.50% on taxable property in the district? This would raise an additional \$357,430 for the district's annual budget. The 2012/2013 annual budget total dollar amount would be increased by 10.26 percent.
- Shall the maximum allowable annual tax rate for educational purposes of **Somonauk CUSD 432**, in DeKalb County, be increased to 4.0% upon all taxable property of the district?
- Shall the maximum tax rate for the tax levied for educational purposes by **Stewardson-Strasburg CUSD 5A**, Strasburg, in Shelby and Effingham Counties, be increased for five years by 0.50 percent, from the currently authorized rate of 2.0 percent to a rate not to exceed 2.50 percent? This would raise an additional \$174,738 to support the district's budget, an increase of 5.1% over the current budget.
- Shall the limiting rate under the PTELL for **Unity Point CCSD 140**, Carbondale, in Jackson County, Illinois, be increased by an additional amount equal to 0.75% above the limiting rate for any purpose of the school district for levy year 2011 and be equal to 2.5665% of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy year 2012?

The bond issues on the ballot included at least two working cash proposals, and 11 building bond issues. The bond propositions ranged in size from a low total of \$2 million for working cash at **North Mac CUSD 34**, Girard, to \$89 million for high school building improvements at **Township High School District 113**, Highland Park.

Other building bond propositions presented to local voters April 9 included the following:

- A **Butler School District 53**, Oak Brook, bond proposition in DuPage

County. It authorizes the district to increase its debt by \$15 million through issuing general obligation bonds to fund constructing and equipping of a school building.

- A **Community Unit School District 200**, Wheaton, bond proposition in DuPage County. It authorizes CUSD 200 to increase its debt by \$17.6 million through issuance of general obligation bonds to pay for equipping a new early childhood center and replacement of the Jefferson Early Childhood Center.
- A **Hall Township High School District 502**, Spring Valley, bond measure in Bureau County. This measure authorizes the district to increase its debt by \$32 million through issuing general obligation bonds in that amount to fund the construction of a new classroom building.
- A **Harrisburg CUSD 3** bond measure in Saline County. It authorizes the district to issue \$29 million in general obligation bonds to demolish, reconstruct, renovate and generally upgrade high school buildings. This would be paid for from two revenue streams, namely the Saline County sales tax money earmarked for school facilities, and general state aid received by the district, unless these revenue sources are insufficient to pay the cost of the bonds. In that event, new property taxes would be authorized as needed to make up the difference.
- A **THSD 113**, Highland Park, bond measure in Lake County. It would allow the district to issue \$89 million in general obligation bonds to improve the safety and efficiency of physical plants, build and equip additions and renovations to two high schools, repair and replace infrastructure, and renovate and repair portions of the schools.
- An **Illini West High School District 307**, Carthage, bond measure in Hancock County. It would allow the district to acquire land and construct a new school building on the site and issue bonds totaling \$8 mil-

lion to pay the costs of such work.

- A **Lake Park High Community School District 108**, Roselle, bond proposition in DuPage County. It authorizes District 108 to increase its debt by \$8 million through issuance of general obligation bonds.
- A **McHenry CHSD 156** bond measure in Lake and McHenry Counties. It would allow building improvements to be made to install new education technology through the issuance of \$2.2 million in bonds.
- A **North Palos SD 117**, Palos Hills, bond proposition in Cook County. It would allow the district to build and equip a new junior high school building, improve the site and issue district bonds totaling \$30 million to pay those costs.
- A **Princeville CUSD 326** bond proposition in Peoria County. It would enable additions and repairs to buildings through the issuance of bonds totaling \$8.5 million.
- A **Smithton CCSD 130** bond proposition in St. Clair County. It would authorize building and equipping a new middle school, and the upgrading of an elementary school, all through the issuance of \$12 million in building bonds.

In addition to the building bond measures, the following working cash bond propositions appeared on the April ballot:

- A **Herscher CUSD 2** bond proposal. It asks voters for authorization to issue \$3 million in bonds.
- The \$2 million **North Mac CUSD 34** bond proposal already mentioned.

Seventeen countywide sales tax proposals are designed to raise revenue for school facility purposes. Counties voting on sales tax plans for school facilities are: Boone, Christian, Crawford, Douglas, Fulton, Henry, Jersey, LaSalle, Lee, Livingston, Marshall, Mercer, Ogle, Randolph, Tazewell, Whiteside and Woodford.

Results of finance referendums April 9 will be reported in the May newsletter.

PENSION *from page 1*

the pension, or \$750 per year.

- HB 1154 (Madigan) would cap the pensionable salary amount for TRS participants at the social security indexed amount (about \$113,000).
- HB 1166 (Madigan) would gradually increase the retirement age for TRS participants up to age 67.

All three of these bills were sent to the Senate but that chamber has not yet acted on any of that legislation.

A more comprehensive bill was approved by a House committee and sent to the House floor for consideration. HB 3411 (Cross) contains the provisions for the COLA adjustment, the age increase, the pensionable salary cap, and several other pension-related items. This bill awaits action on the House floor.

In the Senate, SB 1 (Cullerton) was amended to affect only active Tier I members of TRS, and would not force any changes to current annuitants of TRS. The bill would require active TRS members to choose between keeping the compounding 3% COLA, or accepting a lesser COLA and remain eligible for health insurance upon retirement. It would also freeze the salary, for pensionable purposes, of active TRS members who do not choose the lesser COLA and would offer the Early Retirement Option (ERO) only to those TRS members who choose the lesser COLA.

None of the bills mentioned above contain provisions to shift the pension costs from the state onto local school districts. That idea is still very much sought after, however, by both Speaker Madigan and President Cullerton, and it will likely surface in a separate piece of legislation after a pension reform measure is agreed upon.

Gov. Pat Quinn, too, has made it clear he wants the state to shift all or part of the teachers' pension burden to local districts. The governor has long pushed for such pension reform.

Eventually, all the pension ideas will be melded into one bill that must be approved by both houses of the General Assembly. Meanwhile, law-

makers will continue to struggle with the decision to alter pension benefits that many employees believe have been promised to them, balance a state budget that is in near-shambles, and satisfy specific provisions of the Illinois Constitution.

Teachers make up nearly three quarters of the state's pension costs. But school leaders around Illinois say the state cannot leave school districts too much on the hook, particularly as Gov. Pat Quinn has proposed a budget that calls for 8.2 percent cuts in education spending in fiscal year 2014, which begins July 1.

"School districts say they can't make up that proposed shortfall with local revenue so paying additional pension costs would be devastating," said IASB Deputy Executive Director Ben Schwarm.

Already, school supporters say, the state has failed to pay school districts the full amount of state aid pledged to them in the past few years, sending districts 95 percent in fiscal year 2012 and 89 percent in fiscal 2013. Projections are for 83 percent to be paid in fiscal year 2014. Meanwhile, the state's backlog of bills owed to schools totals more than \$700 million.

Yet the state board of education website describes state funding as a way to equalize spending on students by setting a foundation level — \$6,119 this year — in funding per student. But even though the School Code sets the foundation level at the \$6,119 level, the proration of General State Aid drops that level considerably. The effective foundation level given the Governor's budget request would be \$5,452 per pupil.

When local property taxes fall short of the foundation level, state funding is supposed to make up the difference to reach that basic level, but state leaders have not been providing the promised money and Quinn has even suggested decreasing transportation reimbursements next year to 19 percent, which is a significant drop. (See story on page 2.)

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 25 – Illini Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Urbana

April 30 – Wabash Valley Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Casey

May 1 – Kaskaskia Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Greenville

May 1 – Central Illinois Valley Division Summer Governing Meeting, Peoria

May 2 – Abe Lincoln Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, IASB, Springfield

May 2 – Blackhawk Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Geneseo

May 2 – Shawnee Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Marion

May 7 – Egyptian Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Mt. Vernon

May 7 – Western Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Macomb

May 9 – Corn Belt Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Fairbury

May 10 – Mandatory Training, Effingham

May 10-11 – New Board Member Boot Camp, Crystal Lake

May 11 – Basics of Governance Workshop, Effingham

May 11 – Basics of Governance Workshop, Crystal Lake

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