

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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Yard signs for and against school funding referendums were common in the lead up to the March 18 primary voting outcome. See story on page 6.

Large superintendents group pushes to delay Common Core testing

Seventeen district superintendents delivered a letter in late February to Christopher Koch, state superintendent of education, pleading for him to “slow down the train” by delaying the state’s achievement test under Common Core. They said more time is needed to evaluate implementation options.

A total of 36 superintendents from districts in the Chicago area signed the letter.

“We want an assessment that is valid, is reliable, is meaningful and is in the best interests of students. Schools should be held accountable. We embrace that. But you have to balance it with, is this in the best interest of students?” said Lynne Panega, a co-author of the letter and superintendent of the **Lake Park CHSD 108**, in Roselle. Panega’s remark was quoted in a Feb. 23 article in the *Champaign News-Gazette*.

State lawmakers subsequently introduced House Resolution 543, sponsored by Rep. Dwight Kay, D-Glen Carbon, that urges the Illinois State Board of Education to delay the implementation of Common Core Standards until a study is conducted showing the costs associated with them.

Rep. Kay said the only substantive cost analysis of the implementation of the Common Core Standards,

Annual conference keynote speakers include prominent educators and authors

Speakers for the General Sessions at the 2014 Joint Annual Conference have been announced and include two nationally prominent educators and authors and one other who is equally well known among his Illinois colleagues.

John Draper will be the keynote speaker at the First General Session on Friday, Nov. 21. Draper is a consultant to the National School Public Relations Association, a membership organization dedicated to increasing the effectiveness of school leaders and building support for schools and school districts.

For the last 30-plus years he has been middle and high school teacher, assistant principal, middle and high

school principal, executive director of the Council for Leaders in Alabama Schools, and was CEO of the Educational Research Service prior to joining NSPRA.

He is also co-author of the book, *Crucial Conversations about America’s Schools*, published in 2010.

Jim Burgett, CEO of The Burgett Group, is a speaker, author, consultant and facilitator, and will be the keynoter at the Second General Session on Saturday, Nov. 22. The Burgett Group consists of three Burgett family members – Jim, Gordon and Doug – offering professional development services for schools and other organizations.

See **SPEAKERS** on page 9

See **COMMON CORE** on page 4

Wellness conference set

Registration is open for the 7th annual Illinois School Wellness Conference on April 30 in Champaign. The event is hosted by the ISBE and Illinois Action for Healthy Kids. Sessions will highlight successful health and wellness-related outreach in schools, innovative projects that improve the health of the school community, and emerging issues impacting school health and wellness. Attendees will get a Certificate of Completion to receive 5 CPDUs. Registration costs \$50 per participant. For more information or to register, go to <http://bit.ly/ILconf>. Questions? Contact Lindsey Arenberg at LArenberg@actionforhealthykids.org or 800-416-5136, ext. 108.

CMS computers offered

The Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS) has established a new Computer Donation Program to make hundreds of surplus computers available to eligible schools and non-profit agencies across the state. Applications from schools in districts located in Census-defined poverty areas will receive preference. For a link to the application, contact information and more details, go online to <http://pcdonation.cms.illinois.gov>.

Comment on licensing rules

A set of proposed amendments and proposed rules recently reviewed by ISBE are available for public comment. The proposals have been posted on the agency's website at <http://www.isbe.net/rules>. Choose "Proposed Rules and Amendments." Comments or suggestions should be sent to rules@isbe.net. A key change involves Part 25 (Educator Licensure): it adds a new Section 25.355 and revises Section 25.360 specific to the endorsement for a superintendent. The public comment period ends May 12.

Lawmakers seek facts on prospective state funding cuts of nearly \$1 billion

State superintendent Christopher Koch was called to testify on March 14 to the Illinois House Appropriations Committee on the impact of a hypothetical \$967 million budget reduction to K-12 education. The hearing was requested because of the state's projected revenue shortfall.

Koch said General State Aid comprises nearly 70 percent of the state's K-12 budget and, together with mandated categoricals, accounts for 92 percent of the K-12 budget. He said any reductions in the education budget of that magnitude would require a significant reduction to GSA.

Koch furnished lawmakers with some stark statistics at the committee hearing. A \$967 million additional reduction to GSA would increase the amount of proration from today's 89 percent to about 65 percent, he said. Such a reduction would more than double the number of Illinois school districts in "Financial Watch" status, increasing the total from 49 to 113. The number of districts in deficit spending mode would increase from 532 to 724, or roughly 84 percent of all districts, he testified.

"We anticipate that more than 30 districts would not survive the year if such reductions were to take place," Koch later stated in his weekly newsletter, dated March 17.

"Regardless of where such reductions were to occur in the budget, Illinois would be sending a clear message that our children are not our priority," Koch wrote.

The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance is included in the budgetary discussions in the statehouse this spring, and agrees with Koch on his assessment of the impact



State Superintendent of Education Chris Koch was called to testify March 14 on the projected impact of nearly \$1 billion in cuts to K-12 education.

of such cuts:

"We should take a careful look at these proposals to find ways to avoid devastating cuts to schools, and to find if cuts can be made in other areas of the state budget rather than on the backs of the school children of Illinois," said IASB Deputy Executive Director Ben Schwarm.

"Meanwhile the next step is for the governor's proposal to be translated to bill form and for the legislative process to begin on this and other state budget proposals," Schwarm said.

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

Illinois Association of School Boards

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Quinn budget would hinge on making tax hike permanent

Gov. Pat Quinn's proposed state budget would make permanent a 67 percent income tax hike adopted in 2011 that is due to expire in 2015. In exchange for extending the life of the income tax hike, the governor wants to offer homeowners a \$500 credit on property tax payments.

Quinn said that the temporary tax increase, which boosted the tax from 3 percent to today's 5 percent rate, needs to be made permanent in order to adequately fund the state's public education commitments. The accompanying new property tax relief proposal, meanwhile, would become an annual refund as part of a restructuring of existing property tax relief provided to income tax filers.

"The issue of expiring revenue this year is a real challenge that will require another hard choice," Quinn said. Without the higher income tax, he said, the state will face "extreme cuts...that will starve our schools."

The governor said he wants to increase funding for education by \$344 million next year and \$6 billion over

the next five years. Quinn's plan calls for spending \$100 million next year and \$1.5 billion over the next five years on early childhood programs for children from birth to age five, and adding \$50 million next year to a monetary assistance program for college students in Illinois. Quinn also said he wants to direct more money toward paying down state government's multi-billion-dollar backlog of old bills.

Quinn also told state legislators on March 26 that the only alternative would be to allow the 5 percent income tax rate to drop to 3.75 as provided by law on Jan. 1. But he warned that such a course would undermine most state government programs, particularly elementary and secondary education.

"With no legislative action this year, the current individual income tax rate would fall from 5% to 3.75% and the current corporate income tax rate would drop from 7% to 5.25% on Jan. 1, 2015. Such a rollback in rates would create a budget cut of \$1 billion for Fiscal Year 2015," said IASB Deputy Executive Director Ben Schwarm. "If this significant loss of

revenue were to occur, it would put transportation funding in jeopardy and cause General State Aid to be prorated at alarming rates, causing deep harm to public schools," said Schwarm.

Schwarm said the school management group called the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance was encouraged to hear the governor place emphasis on the central importance of public education to the future of the state.

"Given the recent series of education budget cuts, the state must explore ways to provide additional funding for our public schools, whether it comes from extending the current income tax rates, a surcharge on millionaires (a proposal advanced by House Speaker Michael Madigan on March 20), or elsewhere," according to a statement issued by the Alliance.

Schwarm added that while it is noteworthy that Quinn favors keeping the tax rate hike, it remains to be seen if that proposal will be translated into action by the General Assembly or when and how the legislature may act on the idea.

President's education budget seeks \$100 million more for preschools

President Obama proposed nearly \$69 billion in discretionary appropriations for education on March 4 as part of the administration's FY 2015 budget. The request for \$69 billion in discretionary appropriations represents an increase of 2 percent over the previous year, including more than \$100 million for Illinois preschool programs.

Three-quarters of the proposed federal funding for education would go to financial aid for students in college, special education, and high-poverty schools (Title I). The remaining 23 percent would target specific areas and reforms designed to leverage changes in educational opportunity for all students, including the expansion of access to high-quality preschool, data-driven instruction based on standards, and mitigating the effects of poverty on educational outcomes.

A key element of the 2015 budget is preschool funding—a proposed \$1.3 billion in mandatory funds next year, as part of a 10-year, \$75 billion commitment. This proposed voluntary preschool federal-state partnership administered by the Department of Education is intended to build on and strengthen existing state systems to provide all low- and moderate-income four-year-old children with publicly-funded preschool.

Funded jointly by states and the federal government, the program would promote access to full-day kindergarten and encourage expansion of programs to include middle-class kids and kids under age four.

The federal funding over 10 years totaling \$75 billion would be paid for by raising federal tobacco taxes.

Under the proposal, Illinois would receive an estimated \$102.3 million in

the first year it participated in the Preschool for All program. This funding, combined with an initial estimated state match of \$10.2 million, would serve about 12,497 Illinois children from low- and moderate-income families in the first year.

The administration also is proposing \$500 million nationwide—double last year's funding—for Preschool Development Grants. And \$250 million would be added via the Opportunity, Growth, and Security Initiative.

About 24,263 children in Illinois from birth to age three are currently served by the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

To be eligible for funding, prospective grantees would have to describe how they will expand access to children from low- to moderate-income

See **PRESCHOOLS** on page 5

COMMON CORE *from page 1*

conducted by the Pioneer Institute – a non-partisan, privately funded research organization – estimates the financial impact for Illinois to be nearly \$773 million over sev-



Lynn Panega

en years. Many school districts lack the technology, infrastructure and funding needed to purchase new textbooks and computers in order to comply with Common Core, Kay added.

“Even local school officials I have spoken to oppose this new program. With each new administration, there is always a new proposal that is sold as the latest and best way to educate our children. Without a doubt improving our education system by implementing new technology in the classroom is imperative and crucial to making our next generation competitive in the workforce and global economy. However, until our state can meet its current obligations to our schools, I urge the State Board of Education to delay the implementation of Common Core.”

The so-called PARCC test —developed recently by Pearson Publishing Co. through a consortium of states called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers — is designed to match the new Common Core learning standards and to better gauge whether students are on track to succeed, state education officials say.

PARCC is being piloted in schools this spring on a limited basis and is scheduled to be used for grades three to 11 in 2015, replacing both the Illinois State Achievement Tests (ISAT) and the Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE) for high school juniors.

The new test has raised concern among educators for several reasons, they say, including the possibility it may not include the ACT, the most widely recognized college-entrance exam. Since 2001, juniors statewide have taken the ACT for free in high school as a component of the Prairie

State exam.

In 2010, Illinois became one of 48 states to opt for Common Core by accepting federal funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and through the Race to the Top Initiative of the Federal Government. Over the next few years the Common Core Standards, which are largely untested in the United States, will substantively change the educational standards for students in Illinois, thus affecting every teacher and student in the state.

The seven superintendents who met with Koch asked him to drop the PARCC for 11th graders and continue using the ACT and existing “work keys” career-readiness tests instead.

While the superintendents said they are impressed by the quality of the new PARCC test, the ACT and final exams are perceived as “significantly more important” by students, families and colleges. And many high schools use the ACT and its college-readiness program for freshmen and sophomores as an integral part of their school improvement plans, with good results, officials said.

In addition, the 15.5 hours of test time that PARCC will require between March and June fall during the same window as the national ACT spring test date, final exams and tests for Advanced Placement high school courses, “resulting in a veritable season of test-taking at the expense of instruction,” the superintendents’ letter said.

The state has said the PARCC test will be administered to grades 3-11 in two parts, once during the third quarter to measure progress, and once at the end of the year. Students will be tested in waves over a 20-day period in literacy and math.

Since many high school classes have a mixture of students from different grades, a significant number could be absent for any given class over a 40-day period, or 87 percent



Rep. Dwight Kay

of the semester, the superintendents’ letter argued.

Mary Fergus, spokeswoman for the Illinois State Board of Education, said the board is aware of the concerns about the ACT, and that’s why the agency’s state budget request for 2015 includes \$14 million to continue giving the ACT as the state transitions to the new test. But it may be difficult to get the money because the agency is also asking for full funding for the PARCC test (\$33 million), she said.

Altogether the ISBE’s proposed budget seeks \$54.5 million for assessments, almost double this year’s \$27.4 million appropriation.

She said that if legislators do not want to fund both the PARCC and ACT, the state would advocate for funding the PARCC because it aligns with the new state standards.

The ACT was initially included as part of the statewide testing program in 2001 because it is a rigorous exam and the state board wanted to give more students access to the test.

Source: *Champaign News-Gazette*, “Superintendents seek to ‘slow down the train’ on new high-school test,” Feb. 23; and letter to State Superintendent Christopher Koch from 36 Illinois high school superintendents.

The full letter is available online at: <http://www.lend-dupage.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/HS-Supt-PARCCForum-Koch-Comm-Final.pdf>.



"YOU NEED A DOCTOR'S EXCUSE TO TAKE A SICK DAY!"

Parents win case against school district on grooming



Jared Boyer is a Valparaiso University Law School graduate and former IASB extern.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SCHOOL LAW

In schools, dress and grooming policies have long been justified by concerns over student safety, the need to limit distractions and the desire for all students to bear a clean-cut image according to community standards. Many schools carefully tailor their policies to ensure that students' first amendment rights are not infringed. But a recent court decision will have many school administrators and school attorneys re-reading their grooming policies for another reason entirely.

In *Hayden v. Greensburg Community School Corp.* (7th Cir. Feb. 24, 2014), A.H., a male student at Greensburg, wanted to play basketball. He soon discovered that Greensburg school policy permits school coaches to establish hair length and grooming rules for the teams they coach. The coach of the boys' basketball team had determined that boys must keep their hair cut above the ears, eyebrows and collar. The court's review of the record determined that no similar hair length policy applied to the girls' basketball team. After attempting to try out for the team with his hair long, A.H. was told he would need to cut his hair in order to play basketball. A.H.'s parents complained to school officials, but the officials supported the decision of the basketball coach.

The parents of A.H. sued the school district alleging sex discrimination under the equal protection clause and Title IX. His parents argued that the policy unconstitutionally applies to boys wishing to play basketball, but not girls. The court agreed. Specifically, the court concluded that the lack of an equivalent burden on female

basketball players constituted discrimination. The court noted that the hair-length policy for boys was quite restrictive, and rejected the argument that community standards would require boys to keep their hair short. In determining whether the school had the intent to discriminate, which is required to prove a claim under Title IX, the court looked to the record. Noting that A.H.'s parents complained to school administrators who upheld the policy, the court concluded that the school had the intent required for A.H. to prevail in a claim for damages under Title IX.

The parents also argued that A.H.

based on relevant community standards. School officials should consult with an attorney to determine whether this seventh circuit decision, which is binding throughout the state of Illinois, requires them to make changes to their school's grooming policy.

Jared Boyer graduated from Valparaiso University Law School in May 2013. During the summer of 2012, he worked as extern with the Office of General Counsel at IASB. He earned a B.A. from Valparaiso University in Political Science and completed a second major in Constituent Services. While attending

...School officials should consult with an attorney to determine whether this seventh circuit decision, which is binding throughout the state of Illinois, requires them to make changes to their school's grooming policy.

had a fundamental right to wear his hair at the length of his choosing and that this right was infringed without due process. Noting that the interest A.H. had in choosing the length of his hair did not rise to the high level of a fundamental right, the court determined that A.H. could not prove his right to due process had been infringed.

School officials looking to review their school's grooming policies, will want to ensure that it applies equivalent burdens to both sexes. Courts have historically allowed for different grooming requirements for boys and girls, noting the differences in community standards. This opinion should not be understood to require schools to have one grooming policy which applies verbatim to boys and girls. The important consideration for school officials is whether the policy applies equivalent burdens to male and female students, and whether differences are

Valparaiso, he served as executive chair of the University Honor Council which investigates and tries alleged cases of academic dishonesty. Boyer currently works as an investigator in the Office of the Inspector General for the Chicago Board of Education. In this capacity, he investigates allegations of waste, fraud, financial mismanagement and employee misconduct.

PRESCHOOLS *from page 3*

families, ensure an adequate supply of high-quality preschool slots and qualified teachers, monitor for continuous improvement, partner with local education agencies and other providers, and sustain high-quality services after the grant period. These competitive grants would lay the groundwork for states to be eligible for Preschool for All funding.

Voters ok seven of 16 tax questions, five of nine bond issues

A preliminary, unofficial look at school referendum results shows voters approved seven of 16 local school tax questions, and five of nine school bond propositions in the March 18 primary election.

The 44 percent passage rate for tax issues is above the 36 percent average approval rate seen for such questions in primary elections since November 1989. The 55 percent approval rate for bond issue questions on the ballot last month fell just below the 58 percent average approval rate over the past 25 years.

Six of 16 countywide sales tax increase proposals also were passed. Sales tax propositions to raise funds for school facility purposes passed in Fulton, Hamilton, Mason, Pike, Randolph, and Shelby counties. This brings to 24 the total number of counties in the state that have adopted a countywide sales tax benefitting school facilities.

Districts where tax increase proposals for educational purposes won voter approval include: **Grant CCSD 110**, Fairview Heights; **Hartsburg-Emden CUSD 21**; **Kinnikinnick CCSD 131**, Roscoe; **Nauvoo-Colusa CUSD 325**; **Odin District 722**; **Spring Lake CCSD 606**, Manito; and **Unity Point CCSD 140**, Carbondale.

The five bond issues approved by voters are all building bond propositions, aimed at providing funds for school building construction or repairs. Bond issues were passed in: **Chaney-Monge District 88**, Crest Hill; **El Paso-Gridley CUSD 11**; **Glenbard THSD 87**, Glen Ellyn; **Johnsburg CUSD 12**; and



Princeville CUSD 326.

Counties where sales tax referenda failed are: Carroll, Coles, DeWitt, Effingham, Gallatin, McLean, Peoria, Rock Island, Stephenson, and Whiteside counties.

Board member election

In other March 18 voting, a school board election was held in Peoria SD 150 for a lone seat on the board. There, challenger Sue L. Wolstenholm defeated incumbent Laura Petelle for the District 3 seat. The seat represents schools on the northern edge of Peoria.

Oddly enough, Wolstenholm withdrew from the race on February 21, 2014, but it was too late for her name to be withdrawn from the ballot. She has said she will not accept her seat, and the board likely will fill the vacancy within 45 days of the end of Petelle's term in July. The appointed board member then would serve until the next board election in March 2015.

Consolidations, deactivation

In addition to the list of finance referendum questions, at least four

district reorganization proposals appeared on March 18 ballots, including three school district consolidations and one elementary school deactivation. Two of the four proposals received public approval.

The consolidation of **Milford CCSD 280** with **Milford THSD 233** passed by a two-to-one margin. The consolidation will officially start July 1.

Cherry Grade School District 92, Bureau County, won approval to deactivate and send its students to **Dimmick CCSD 175**, LaSalle County. It passed by a vote of 242-14 in the Cherry district and by a vote of 21-3 in Dimmick. The change will be implemented at the start of the next school year.

Two proposals were defeated, including one that called for creation of a unit school district in the territory comprising **Panhandle CUSD 2**, Raymond, and **Morrisonville CUSD 1**. It passed by nearly a four to one margin in the Raymond district, but failed in the Morrisonville district by a margin of 55 to 45 percent.

Voters also defeated a proposed consolidation to join **A-C Central CUSD 262**, Ashland, with **PORTA CUSD 202**, Petersburg. Voters in the Petersburg school district voted more than three-to-one in favor of consolidating. But A-C Central voters rejected the proposal on a margin of 57 to 43 percent of the vote.

Results of previous school finance referenda over the past 25 years are available online at: <http://www.iasb.com/elections/finance.cfm>.

Illinois educator wins '20 to watch' honors for school technology use

An educator from Illinois is among the winners of the National School Boards Association's 8th annual "20 to Watch" recognition program celebrating leaders in education technology.



John Connolly

John Connolly, Director of Technology, **Consolidated High School District 230**, Orland Park, was named to receive the award from NSBA's Technology Leadership Network on March 7.

"John's energy has inspired staff ... to further embrace technology in the teaching and learning process," said Superintendent James M. Gay. "He has established a clear vision that

uses technology as a teaching tool and catalyst for learning. His emphasis is always on collaboration and empowering staff to use technology to support the curriculum."

Connolly was chosen for his success in "transforming District 230 with his ideas, collaborative leadership style, and technology improvements."

See **20 TO WATCH** on page 8

Guide aims to help students meet their individual goals via 'ILPs'

Guide provides proven framework for schools to engage students

A new guide released March 10 provides districts with a framework for engaging students through individualized plans of learning. The guide is designed to support educators across the state, and specifically those in the 35 Illinois Race to the Top districts that are required to pilot an Individualized Learning Plan (ILP) process as part of their grant.

"There is a national movement to use Individualized Learning Plans to promote college and career readiness for all students," said Curtis Richards, director of the Center for Workforce Development at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, D.C.

"Today, 37 states and the District of Columbia either require or encourage the use of ILPs to promote student success," Richards said.

As standards for classroom rigor and excellence increase, educators can use tools that allow them to individualize and customize the educational experiences of their students.

Long used in special education, Individual Learning Plans are an increasingly popular mechanism to meet this need. ILPs are student-specific written strategies of education resulting from a student-directed process that supports children as they map out their personal, academic and career goals. ILPs are part of a comprehensive school-counseling approach that aims to improve college and career readiness.

Individualized Learning Plans typically are introduced in the middle grades, continuing with the student at least through high school. Illinois' Race to the Top districts are piloting or enhancing their ILP processes during the current school year.

The National Collaborative on Workforce Development and Disability for Youth, which Richards directs,

has conducted extensive research on the use of ILPs nationally and developed a number of resources for educators and policymakers.

"Our research shows that students using ILPs have improved school engagement, grade point averages, and career decision-making and lowered anxiety and stress levels," Richards said.

While the main beneficiaries of ILPs are students, the process allows secondary and postsecondary educators, school districts and state policy makers to gain valuable information. Experts say this allows school districts, for example, to more effectively respond and meet the educational needs of their students.

The new guide called *Achieving their Dreams: Implementing an Individualized Learning Plan Process to Build Student Success*, written by Heather Fox of the Pathways Resource Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, debuted in January. It was initially provided to an audience of 110 educational personnel interested in using ILPs in their schools and districts.

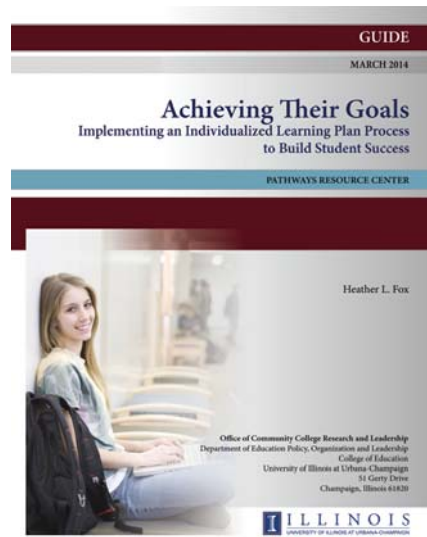
Fox notes that the comprehensive guide serves two purposes: to provide districts with "a framework for high quality Individualized Learning Processes and a model for implementing or enhancing ILPs at their school or

35 LEADING DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN RACE TO THE TOP

- Addison SD 4
- Bensenville ESD 2
- Bloomington District 87
- Brooklyn Unit SD 188
- Calumet Public Dist 132
- Canton Union SD 66
- Carbon Cliff-Barstow 36
- Country Club Hills District 160
- CPS District 299
- East Richland CUSD 1
- East St Louis SD 189
- Eastland CUSD 308
- Freeport SD 145
- General George S Patton SD 133
- Illini Central SD 189
- Marion CUSD 2
- Matteson SD 162
- McLean CUSD 5
- Morrison CUSD 6
- Niles Township HSD 219
- Pembroke CCSD 259
- Peoria SD 150
- Prairie-Hills ESD 144
- Rantoul City District 137
- Rich Township HSD 227
- Sandoval CUSD 501
- Sterling CUSD 5
- Township HSD 211
- Unity Point SD 140
- Urbana SD 116
- Wabash CUSD 348
- West Richland CUSD 2
- Western CUSD 12
- Winnebago CUSD 323
- Zion ESD 6



The book aims to support educators across the state, and specifically those in all Illinois Race to the Top districts. As shown in this map, there are 35 such districts; all are required to pilot an ILP process.



The new ILP guide is authored by a University of Illinois authority on such learning plans and is geared to Illinois educators.

district."

The guide is available on the Pathways Resource Center website at http://pathways.illinois.edu/?page_id=928.

Nominees sought for annual Holly Jack board secretary award

The Illinois Association of School Boards once again is seeking nominations for its “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.

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. 21.

IASB invites school board presidents and superintendents to nominate their local district employee (superintendent’s secretary, superintendent’s administrative assistant, school board recording secretary, etc.) who does the work required of the school board secretary by *The School Code* of Illinois.

To be eligible for the award 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 identified below, the nominee should demonstrate the characteristics similar to those shown by Holly Jack in her work with school districts.

- Performance - Performs “above and beyond” expectations, always going the extra mile to serve the district’s educational staff, school board, community members, and students.
- 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 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. 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. 29.

Nomination forms will soon be available online at: <http://iasb.com/>.

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.

The list of winners to date includes: 2009, Janet Miller, **Mt. Vernon ESD 80**; 2010, Mary Ellen McElligott, **Marquardt School District 15**, Glendale Heights; 2011, Dottie Crews, **Community Unit School District 16**, New Berlin; 2012, Debra Williams, **Arlington Heights School District 25**; and 2013, Pam Burgeson, **Geneva CUSD 304**.

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.

A nomination form is available on the IASB website at: <http://www.iasb.com/jac14/pdfs/HollyJackAward2014.pdf>.

20 TO WATCH *from page 6*

Judges said that Connolly set a vision that includes directing a 1:1 and “Bring Your Own Device” program (which allows students to bring their own smart phones and tablets to use in lessons at school), plus leveraging social media, digital citizenship, Google migration, and website overhaul. “Connolly’s energy and passion inspire colleagues,” an NSBA spokesperson said.

This year’s “20” were honored March 19 at the yearly conference of the Consortium of Social Networking, in Washington, and will be recognized at NSBA’s 2014 Annual Conference in New Orleans this April.

Green school buildings symposium is free

Illinois school leaders are invited to attend a free Illinois Healthy & High Performing Schools Symposium on Friday, April 18, 2014 from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The event will be hosted by the U.S. Green Building Council’s Illinois chapter, as well as the Illinois Green Governments Coordinating Council and Adlai E. Stevenson High School in Lincolnshire

This symposium for Illinois K-12 schools is an opportunity to exchange ideas with symposium participants including school and district administrators, regional superintendents, school board members, facilities managers, custodians, teachers, etc.

Speakers and workshops will cover sustainable facility planning and siting, green facilities management, sustainable renovation and construction, energy efficiency, environmental education and service learning, water conservation, waste cuts, and sustainable transportation.

Registration for the symposium will be offered at no cost to general admission attendees through the generosity of program sponsors. Registration is required. For more information on the 2014 program agenda, schedule and attendee registration, visit green.illinois.gov and *USGBC-Illinois*.

SPEAKERS from page 1

Burgett was twice named the administrator of the year in Illinois during a 36-year career as a teacher, principal and superintendent in three districts, **River Ridge**



John Draper



Jim Burgett



Craig Kielburger

CUSD 10, Elizabeth CUD and Highland CUSD 5. He has written or co-authored five books, the latest being *The Art of School Boarding*, published in 2013.

The featured speaker at the Third General Session on Sunday, Nov. 23, is Craig Kielburger, social entrepreneur, author, and syndicated columnist.

Kielburger co-founded Free The Children, an international charity and educational partner, in 1995 at age 12. Today, more than 1.7 million young people are involved in its programs.

In North America and the United Kingdom, the organization provides comprehensive service-learning programs. In numerous developing countries, Free The Children provides a holistic and sustainable development model, including education, health care, food security, clean water, and alternative income programs.

Kielburger is also the author or co-author of 12 books. His newest, titled *The Power of We Day, Moving the World from Me to We*, was released in the fall of 2013.

Local districts urged to submit resolutions through June 25 to guide Association's course

Local school boards are invited to submit resolutions for the 2014 Delegate Assembly. Information and resolution forms were mailed to district superintendents and board presidents on 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 resolutions submitted by member districts in order to establish policy for IASB.

Proposals from active member boards may be submitted for new resolutions, amendments to existing position statements, reaffirmations of existing position statements, or belief statements.

The deadline to submit resolu-

tions is June 25.

A committee consisting of one elected member from each of the 21 IASB divisions will meet Aug. 1 to review resolution proposals. The committee is empowered to recommend the approval or disapproval of proposed resolutions, and to determine which ones are presented. This year's committee is chaired by IASB Vice President Phil Pritzker.

Appeals to resolutions committee decisions are allowed when submitted in writing at least eight days before the Delegate Assembly, which will be held on Saturday, Nov. 22.

For information about this process, contact division representatives to the Resolutions Committee listed in the mailing, or phone IASB's Connie Crowder at ext. 1132.

Resolution forms are also posted on the IASB website at: <http://www.iasb.com/govrel/resolution-form.pdf>.

NEWS FROM IASB

Division governing meetings

All board members and superintendents are invited to attend their division governing meeting. Beginning April 29 and concluding June 25, the meetings maintain governance and determine board development programming topics for the fall 2013 and spring 2014 division dinner meetings.

"All educational programming for these governing meetings is locally determined," said Cathy Talbert, IASB associate executive director. "Some divisions delegate this responsibility to an elected executive committee, while others discuss and determine topics of interest at governing meetings," Talbert said.

Governing meetings are listed on the IASB website calendar at <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/>.

Division meetings

IASB's spring division meetings will wrap up on April 30. Three divisions will be hosting their regular division meetings this month, including Kishwaukee (April 10), at Hinckley; West Cook (April 29), at Elmwood Park; and South Cook (April 30), at Alsip.

The meeting programs will cover issues ranging from how schools can respond to the Affordable Care Act to understanding Illinois' fiscal condition, and state intervention proposals in the legislature that would allow the state to remove elected school board members based on what the ISBE believes to be bad behavior.

Registration is open to all school board members, regardless of their school district's division affiliation. For information and to register for any meeting, visit IASB's online calendar at: <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm>.

NEWS HEADLINES

Chicago (March 20, *Chicago Tribune*) Catholic school officials are blasting the Chicago Public Schools' new test for admission to its top high schools. CPS officials had recently informed parents that the Northwest Evaluation Association's Measures of Academic Progress taken by seventh graders this spring would be used for admissions at the city's best campuses for the 2015-2016 school year. Previously, results of the Illinois Standards Achievement Test were used for that purpose. Some district parents objected that their children would be at a disadvantage because private school students who were applying to CPS selective enrollment schools would be allowed to take the same test from previous years.

Danville (March 13, *News-Gazette*, Champaign) Danville's school board has found that a district dress code proposal needs work. Under it, students would not have been allowed to wear jeans to school. School officials have been developing the proposal since late January, when board members opted to put a stricter dress code in place next year. While no one expects it to result in a dramatic increase in academic achievement, officials hope it will improve the learning environment, reduce classroom distractions, bridge socioeconomic differences between students and increase students' self-respect and self-esteem. After several board members expressed concern over the proposal, they agreed to discuss it in more depth and vote on a revised policy later.

Gifford (March 20, *News-Gazette*, Champaign) Grade school detachment talk has heated up following the Nov. 17 tornado that ripped through Gifford. An advisory referendum is being discussed that would break new ground as so few grade schools have detached from high schools in Illinois. Gifford Superintendent Rod Grimsley said there has been sentiment

among some residents to consider such a move in the past, but the tornado provided more impetus. One option being discussed is a K-12 consolidation with Armstrong-Potomac. "Now with the tornado hitting Gifford and our long-term recovery, the community keeps saying our tax rate is really high," Grimsley said. "I am not sure what the tax rate would be with the consolidated efforts with Armstrong-Potomac, but there would be a strong possibility that it would go down with a consolidated school."

Prairieview (March 19, *News-Gazette*, Champaign) The president of the Prairieview-Ogden board said it is too soon to tell what the board will do about a tax increase referendum that failed in March. The 40-cent increase in the education fund tax rate lost by a vote of 322-182. If it had passed, it would have raised the rate to the maximum of \$2.32 per \$100 of assessment. Meanwhile, Prairieview-Ogden Superintendent Victor White said he knew it was going to be difficult to get the tax increase approved. White said two fourth grade classes will have to be combined into one next school year, and there could potentially be more cuts in early 2015. He said the district saw a cut in general state aid by more than \$360,000 from the 2007-2008 school year to last school year. He said he would like voters to vote out legislators who don't put education as their top priority.

Shelbyville (March 12, *Herald & Review*, Decatur) Cowden-Herrick High School's leaky roof isn't just an annoyance for school district Superintendent Darrell Gordon. He says it is a sign of a statewide failure. Gordon is frustrated because the Illinois General Assembly continues to cut funding for school districts, by more than 15 percent in promised funds this year, and his district has not had the money to fix the roof. "We've cut \$300,000 from our budget in the last year, and

we could lose more than \$100,000 in state funding this year," Gordon said. "In Cowden-Herrick there is no music, there is no band, and there are no art programs. We've cut \$20,000 out of our supply funds." [Note: A sales tax proposition to raise funds for school facility purposes passed in Shelby County March 18 to permit a 1 percent sales tax for district facilities. Administrators said the sales tax could bring as much as \$1 million a year. Supporters campaigned for the tax using social media, including Facebook and YouTube, to share videos of water-stained ceilings, leaking windows and failing sewer systems.]

Statewide (March 24, *The Associated Press*) About 125,000 Illinois students took practice exams beginning the last full week of March to establish the effectiveness of new assessments the state will adopt next year. The tests, administered this year in about 1,800 schools, are tied to learning goals called the Common Core Standards that have been adopted by Illinois and dozens of other states. Illinois plans to implement the testing in all 860 districts next year.

Statewide (March 27, *Chicago Tribune*) Teaching candidates are expected to get more chances soon to pass Illinois' basic skills test for educators. The Illinois State Board of Education approved rules recently to give aspiring teachers an unlimited number of tries to pass the state's reading, writing and math exam. Since January 2010 the state had limited such attempts to pass to five on each part of the test. Now after the state has raised the bar for passing, and with more people struggling to pass, the state board decided to go back to the old policy to allow unlimited attempts to pass. The rule has to be reviewed by a legislative committee and should go into effect in April or May if there are no objections.

Two Illinois districts pull down national awards for bold new ideas

Two Illinois school districts – **Indian Creek CUSD 425**, Shabbona, and **Leyden CHSD 212**, Franklin Park, have been named first-place winners in the 20th annual Magna Awards program by NSBA's *American School Board Journal*.

The Magna Awards recognize school boards for taking bold and innovative steps to advance public education. This year's awards, announced on March 5, honor school districts across the country for outstanding programs that advance student learning and encourage community involvement in schools. An independent panel of board members, administrators, and other educators selected winners from nearly 250 submissions.

This year's three grand prize winners, plus 15 first place, and 15 honorable mention winners, were selected from three enrollment categories: under 5,000 students, 5,000 to 20,000 students, and over 20,000 students. Both first-place winners from Illinois were chosen in the under 5,000-students category.

Indian Creek won for its "DeKalb County R-E-S-P-E-C-T Initiative," which promotes healthy lifestyle choices for students and adults in the county. A three-DVD set program and corresponding guides focus on teaching: respect for all, esteem for self, suicide prevention education, and civility training. Each of the DVDs created for this initiative has age-appropriate tracks. It also has a professional development guide with suggested activities by age level so the topic can be integrated into the curriculum.

Indian Creek Superintendent Pamela R. Rockwood said the program would not have succeeded without the leadership of the school board.

The award for Leyden CHSD 212 was won for Leyden's "Digital Evolution—Using Web-Based Devices in a 1:1 Environment." Through that program, the district distributed 3,500 Google Chromebooks to its students, giving them universal access to a set



Programs won awards in **Indian Creek CUSD 425**, Shabbona (above), and **Leyden CHSD 212**, Franklin Park (below).



of web-based digital tools. The initiative was put in place to narrow a significant technology access divide.

Board members were involved from the beginning. They traveled with administrators and teachers to see best practices. The board had the foresight to allow for infrastructure upgrades to prepare for a one-to-one computing environment. It gave support to the administration to develop a strategy to meet student needs. According to Superintendent Nick Polyak, Board President Greg Ignoffo told the administration, "How can we afford *not* to do this for our students?"



Greg Ignoffo

The 2014 winners are highlighted in the April Journal and were formally recognized on April 5 during NSBA's 74th Annual Conference.

Winning entries will be posted on the Magna Awards website and added to the program's searchable best practices database. Both can be found at www.asbj.com/magna.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April 29 – Wabash Valley Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Casey

April 29 – West Cook Spring Division Meeting, Elmwood Park

April 30 – South Cook Spring Division Meeting, Alsip

May 1 – Illini Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Urbana

May 1 – Blackhawk Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Geneseo

May 1 – Kaskaskia Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Litchfield

May 2-3 – IASB Board of Directors Meeting, Springfield

May 6 – Abe Lincoln Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Springfield

May 6 – Egyptian Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Mt. Vernon

May 7 – Central IL Valley Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Peoria

May 8 – Corn Belt Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Fairbury

May 8 – Shawnee Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Marion

May 14 – Western Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Macomb

May 28 – Southwestern Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Belleville

May 29 – Two Rivers Division Summer Governing Committee Meeting, Jacksonville

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