

# Illinois SCHOOL BOARD *Newsbulletin*

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## Survey: NCLB academic growth rates are off-target

A new study indicates that implementation of the federal law intended to boost student academic growth rates — the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 — has coincided with a decline in academic growth rates.

The study confirms earlier research that found test scores in both math and reading have climbed as each class of students outperformed its immediate predecessors. The problem, however, is that within grades student academics have improved less during each school year than they did before No Child Left Behind went into effect, according to the new study.

Also see *NCLB-related stories*,  
 pages 2, 6, and 7

The Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) conducted the study. NWEA is a non-profit organization that provides educational measurement tools and consultation to 1,450 educational entities in 43 states, including hundreds of school districts. More information about the organization is available at <http://www.nwea.org>.

NWEA researchers found that if the current rate of change in achievement continues it will not bring schools close to the NCLB law's requirement of 100 percent proficiency by 2014.

The Bush administration, which originated the law, maintains NCLB will help schools achieve that 100 percent proficiency goal by sanctioning schools that don't live up to the law's expectations.

The study finds no such impact thus far and reported that the achievement gap between white and nonwhite students may be growing. Bridging that gap is one of the central focuses of the NCLB law, but minority students who scored the same as whites at the beginning of the school year ended up lagging behind later in the year.

Most noteworthy is the fact that Hispanic students improved less than other students within the school year.

"Right now it's kind of a hidden effect that we would expect to see expressed in the next couple of years," said Gage Kingsbury, NWEA's director of research. "At that point, I think people will be disappointed with what NCLB has done."

The study disagrees with a survey released last month by the Center on Education Policy, which found that a significant majority of state education officials reported widespread academic progress and a narrowing of the achievement gap.

See **NCLB** on page 6

### Gorbachev meets school leaders



Former leader of the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachev, was a keynoter at the recent NSBA conference. He also met with state school leaders, including I-: IASB president Ray Zimmerman, executive director Mike Johnson, past president Christy Coleman, and vice president Marie Slater. See story, pages 8-9.

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## ISBE shares format of 'parent-friendly' school profile

ISBE and the Illinois PTA recently unveiled a draft format for the "Illinois School Profile: A Brief Guide for Parents." When available, a profile for each district will offer parents a concise, understandable overview of the information in the NCLB-mandated School Report Card.

While schools will continue to publish the report card, each school profile will present key points from the school's report card in a concise, understandable format for parents and community members.

The profiles will provide information about students, teachers, test scores, class sizes and district budget. A sample is available online in PDF format at: [http://www.isbe.net/news/pdf/draft\\_illinois\\_school\\_profile.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/news/pdf/draft_illinois_school_profile.pdf).

## State issues NCLB guidance tips for school boards

ISBE recently published a guidance document for local school board review and approval of school and district improvement plans. The document contains non-regulatory guidance. "Such guidance is especially important with respect to plans for those schools and districts that have not made adequate yearly progress," according to ISBE.

The new guidance document reflects ISBE's current understanding of the requirements set forth in the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) and the Illinois School Code. ISBE encourages comment on any suggested requirements in the document by submitting an e-mail to [lessredtape@isbe.net](mailto:lessredtape@isbe.net) with a subject line "School and District Improvement Plan Guidance."

The document is online at [http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/guidance\\_document.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/sos/pdf/guidance_document.pdf).

# District financial ranks improve, but at what cost, officials asking

The number of Illinois school districts facing severe financial difficulty fell by 50 percent last year, from 156 to 78, according to a new financial profile released by the Illinois State Board of Education on April 20.

But ISBE's annual financial profile of school districts was greeted with suspicion in education circles, citing painful spending cuts for the improved financial ratings. And state board members reviewing those ratings wondered how much the cuts have harmed schools.

"They have cut drastically programs such as art, music and foreign languages; class sizes are being driven up to incredible numbers," said state board of education member Joyce Karon.

"Districts that had trouble last year may have had to increase class sizes or cut staff," added state board Vice Chairman Christopher Ward, of Lockport.

Ratings categories, in order of severity, are: watch, early warning, review and recognition.

A financial watch rating means that the state will monitor the district closely and offer technical assistance on financial projections, cash flow and budgeting. This rating means that a district has run up deficits, sapped its reserves, borrowed deeply for day-to-day operations or used up available long-term debt.

Financial early warning means that a district could be in financial difficulty. The number of these districts also tumbled, falling from 140 to 112 districts in the 2003-2004 school year.

Financial review, on the other hand, means that a district is financially sound, but will be monitored for potential downward trends.

Financial recognition means that a district requires little state oversight. Over half of the school districts in Illinois, a total of 449, were given this highest rating of fiscal health. That compares to 40 percent of dis-

tricts that got the same rating the previous year.

But school leaders say many districts that achieved better financial ratings this time took extraordinary measures to do so, measures that could affect educational quality. Indeed, several school districts cast doubt about the healthy picture presented.

**Orland Park** Elementary District 135 reported that it received recognition status only because of borrowing – it sold \$7 million in working-cash bonds that helped lower deficits in its education fund, the main account for teacher salaries.

Likewise, **Johnsburg** C.U. Dist. 12 officials stated: "Our district has been negatively impacted because of the level of state funding ... The board has made many cuts the past three years in order to try to achieve a balanced budget. More cuts are currently being contemplated and we have had to go further into debt to augment our fund balance. Our hope is the state will hear the taxpayer's pleas and take action for adequate and equitable state funding coupled with tax relief."


The latest list is online at <http://www.isbe.net/sfms/P/score.pdf>.

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*Newsbulletin*

**Illinois Association  
of School Boards**

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**ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION  
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

# IASB pledges support for national public ed center

## Center will benefit members and public, executive director says

A pledge of \$150,000, or \$30,000 a year over the next five years, earned special recognition for the Illinois Association of School Boards at this year's National School Boards Association annual conference in San Diego.

Executive Director **Mike Johnson**, along with President **Ray Zimmerman**, Vice President **Marie Slater** and Immediate Past President **Christy Coleman**, appeared on stage during Saturday's general session to pledge Illinois' support for a new national Center for Public Education.

The Center will serve primarily as an online resource of information,

tools, and publications for the public as well as state associations, school board members and other educational leaders.

Anne Bryant, executive director for NSBA, said the Center has three objectives: to provide credible information "about the successes and challenges" in K-12 public education; to raise awareness and understanding "of current and emerging issues" that can lead to knowledge and action; and to articulate "the value of public education" as a primary foundation of our democratic society.

"The case for public education can be best made by school board members. The Center for Public Education will provide the tools to make that case for the value and purpose of public education," she said.

Johnson added that IASB recognized early on the need for this service, not only for our members but also for the general public. "Support of public education is a primary focus as evidenced in our mission statement. It makes good sense to invest in a program that will benefit our members as well as further the cause of public education nationwide.

"The amount we pledged was a level that our board and I thought would set a challenge as well as a benchmark for the other associations," he said.

NSBA officials said it would take approximately one year for the Center to go online and be fully funded, staffed and functional. A pilot website can be found at: [http://www.nsba.org/site/index\\_peac.asp](http://www.nsba.org/site/index_peac.asp).

## Districts invited to submit delegate resolutions

The deadline is fast approaching for member boards to submit Delegate Assembly resolutions to direct IASB in the coming year. Copies of resolution forms are available by calling the Association at extension 1132. 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.

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 a delegate. Delegates gather at the Association's annual conference to vote on resolutions submitted by member districts in order to establish policy for IASB.

Submission deadline is June 23. Resolutions are welcome any time before that, however, and earlier submission allows the staff to better serve member districts by preparing adequate background material for the resolution committee.

### *How does the process work?*

A resolutions committee of at least seven individuals is appointed from IASB membership each year by the Association's president 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 commit-

tee decisions are allowed when submitted in writing at least eight days before the delegate assembly, which is scheduled to meet on November 19.

IASB sent letters and forms on April 1 to board presidents and district superintendents asking for submissions. For information, contact your division representative to the Resolutions Committee (representatives were listed in the April 1 mailing) or phone IASB at ext. 1132.

### **Conference information to be mailed on June 10**

June 10 is this year's planned mailing date for the conference registration packet IASB annually sends to district superintendents. Questions about registration procedures for the 2005 annual conference should be directed to IASB Meetings Management, ext. 1115 or 1102.

### **Get school code supplement now**

IASB now has the 2005 supplement to the Illinois School Code, consisting of a 122-page pamphlet and an updated CD ROM of the full 2005 School Code. To obtain a set, contact IASB publications at ext. 1108 or order at the IASB online bookstore at: <http://www.iasb.com/shop/>.

## Board write-in campaign decided in random draw

A deadlocked write-in race for a seat on the **Carol Stream** Elementary District 93 Board of Education was decided simply by drawing names on April 22.

Initially the race was tied between two candidates at four votes apiece. That is, until school board members broke the tie between Angela Semien and Jason Marshall-Lang by writing both names on slips of paper, throwing them in a box and randomly picking one. Semien won the "luck of the draw" runoff.

Gmitro said the district has no written procedure for dealing with a deadlocked race, so the board followed common practice among governmental agencies.

## Kane writing test may help students with SAT, ACT

After the state dropped the writing test from standardized testing requirements this year, Kane County school administrators decided to develop their own.

Seven of nine districts in the county began giving eighth-graders a pilot test in April and will formally administer a writing test in January.

Participating districts are **Aurora** West USD 129; **Batavia** USD 101; Central CUSD 301, **Burlington**; U-46, **Elgin**; **Geneva** CUSD 304; **Kaneland** CUSD 302, **Maple Park**; and **St. Charles** CUSD 303. A committee of 15 people from those districts developed the tests.

This move was necessary, school leaders said, because the legislature cut funding for standardized tests last year from \$26 million to \$17.7 million in order to direct more money to schools in the form of per-pupil funding. As a result, the state lopped off the writing and social studies tests.

# Aurora district earns math award for improved student performance

Students at **Aurora East** District 131 have produced a rising trend in their mathematical scores on the Illinois State Achievement Tests and posted math scores that exceed the 2004 state averages. Many credit professional development opportunities, such as teacher training and support, innovative programs to involve parents, along with the implementation of new curriculums as the keys to the district's success.

In celebration of that success, the educational publisher Wright Group honored the district with a 2005 Excellence in Education Award at the recent National Council of Teachers of Mathematics annual conference in Anaheim, California.

On the 2004 ISAT, 82 percent of all local Grade 3 students met or exceeded state standards, compared

to the 79 percent of the state total. In Grade 5, students consistently improved over a five-year period. In 2004, 74 percent of all district Grade 5 students met or exceeded state mathematics standards, versus 72 percent of the total state.

Moreover, the district's Hispanic, African American and low-income subgroups for both Grades 3 and 5 all performed well above comparable statistics for the state.

"Everyday Mathematics allows students to construct their own knowledge, to explore different ways of solving a problem and to work with each other," said Christie Aird, Director for School Improvement, PreK-5. "The emphasis on vocabulary allows students to talk about math, developing higher-level thinking skills and improving their own mathematics vocabulary," Aird said.

# Church leaders lobby lawmakers for more public education funds

About 200 Lutherans met on the Illinois capitol lawn in late April to ask lawmakers to increase funding for public schools and social services.

The second annual "Lutheran Day," planned by Lutheran Social Services of Illinois, drew church members from throughout the state to Springfield on April 26 for a day of learning and lobbying.

"Our agenda was really to go down there and let our voices be heard," said the Rev. Tom Grevlos, who led a group of seven from

Our Saviour's Lutheran Church in Naperville. "It's our faith in action. ... Religion is not only about eternity, it's about the here and now."

*'It's about our faith in action ... Religion is not only about eternity, it's about the here and now.'*

—Rev. Tom Grevlos  
Our Saviour's  
Lutheran Church  
Naperville

And in the here and now, there are serious problems with adequate and equitable funding of public education, and a wide variety of social services throughout the state, Grevlos said.

The group urged lawmakers to support House Bill 750, which would increase the income tax and provide some property tax relief while boosting public education funding.

# Gambling at crossroads: Can tax hikes offset revenue drop?

Governor Rod Blagojevich recently proposed a gambling casino expansion plan designed to bring in an extra \$300 million for schools. The proposal has focused new attention on concerns about the health of the gaming industry and the reliability of such revenue.

Riverboat gambling has generated billions of dollars for Illinois casino owners and for state and local governments hurting for funds. But insiders say the industry here is now shrinking and has reached a turning point.

Illinois casino gambling gross receipts dropped nearly 8 percent in Fiscal Year 2004 to \$1.6 billion, according to the legislature's economic and fiscal commission. In contrast, nearby gaming states all saw their totals go up, by an average of 7.5 percent.

And the gap in state receipts continues to widen. Industry sources report that in March, 2005, casino revenues shot up 8.4 percent in Iowa, 7.3 percent in Michigan, and 10.1 percent in Missouri, but grew only 2.2 percent in Illinois.

Some blame Illinois' higher rate of taxation. Casinos have watched the state take ever-larger cuts of their earnings: the graduated tax is twice that of any other state.

Some Illinois riverboats cut jobs and services to maintain their earnings when the state adopted a major



Visitors gamble on a stud poker game aboard the Grand Victoria Casino, Elgin.

tax increase in 2003, spiking the top rate upward from a 50 percent rate to a 70 percent rate. Subsequently, Illinois casinos have cut nearly 3,000 jobs, and some have raised fees. As a result, casino attendance has dropped while neighboring states' casinos have thrived.

Attendance at the three casinos in Joliet and Aurora, for example, dropped more than 15 percent in the past two years. Yet casino revenue and attendance inched upward by 5 percent in northern Indiana.

Blagojevich's \$300 million gambling expansion plan has been endorsed by the gaming industry. But a spokesman says it will not work unless the tax rate is lowered.

"Our taxes went up so we started doing less marketing," said Tom Swoik, executive director of the Illinois Casino Gaming Association.

## LEGISLATIVE ACTION

### Bill would limit tax increases to amounts approved in referenda

A bill approved on April 15 by the Illinois Senate addresses concerns about school districts collecting more funds under successful finance referenda than had been projected. Supporters say the bill will close a loophole in the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), commonly known as tax caps.

"Unintended consequences of the tax cap are far and wide," according to Sen. Don Harmon (D-Oak Park), the primary sponsor of the tax cap proposal, S.B. 1682. "I know that they were well intended. But there are kinks in that system."

The bill, now before House lawmakers, would allow districts to ask voters to increase their actual tax rate – the one that shows up on tax bills – rather than the district's available tax rate.

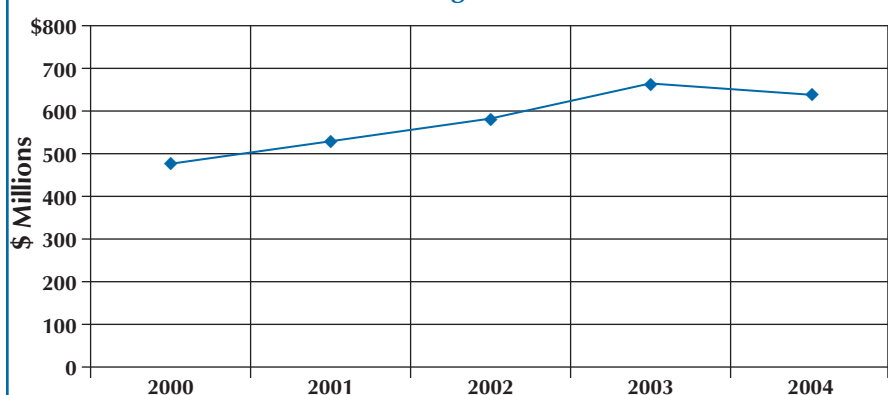
### High school grad bill added to mandates

One bill has recently been added to the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance's list of bills containing mandates – SB 575 carries the governor's proposed new requirements for high school graduation.

The bill, sponsored by Sen. Miguel del Valle (D-Chicago), would increase high school graduation requirements. It would require at least two years of science, instead of one, and require three, rather than two, years of mathematics – including algebra and geometry. It also would require at least two "writing-intensive courses," one being an English course, and require English every year of high school. Passing these courses would be a prerequisite to receiving a high school diploma.

The entire list of bills with mandates is online at <http://www.iasb.com/files/mandates05.htm>.

Riverboat Gambling Revenue – Illinois



Source: Legislative Research Unit

Created by: IASB

# Utah just says no to NCLB, despite fed funding loss

## Proposes own standards to replace key measures

Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman signed a measure on May 2 defying the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, despite a warning from the federal government that it could cost that state up to \$76 million in federal funding.

The legislation represents the staunchest stand against NCLB among the 15 states weighing anti-NCLB bills in 2005. Utah is a Republican-leaning state that overwhelmingly supported President Bush's reelection, and NCLB is considered a centerpiece of the Bush administration's accomplishments.

The legislation, passed during a special session of the legislature last month, gives Utah's education standards priority over federal requirements of the NCLB Act. "It empowers decision makers in the state educa-

tion system, where there is conflict with federal law, to choose to follow the state objective first," said Huntsman's education deputy, Tim Bridgewater.

Utah still will obey key NCLB mandates, such as notifying parents when schools fall short of federal standards, and reporting schools' yearly improvement toward universal student excellence in math and reading.

Utah's method of measuring achievement is known as U-PASS, which stands for the Utah Performance Assessment System for Students. It compares achievement as students advance from one grade to the next.

In contrast, NCLB compares the grade-level test scores of students to the students in the same grade level from previous years, which some say is like comparing apples to oranges. The Illinois Association of School Boards' membership, for example, has called for a changeover from this NCLB

approach in favor of the Utah approach.

An IASB resolution to similar effect was adopted in November 2003, calling for removal of all NCLB provisions that require sanctions against local school districts, and demanding full funding of any requirements placed upon local districts.

Before Utah's bill was adopted, U.S. Education Secretary Margaret Spellings had warned that its adoption could trigger a loss of federal funding if educators used it to stray from NCLB requirements. But Republican Gov. Huntsman's education deputy said he doubts Utah's law will cost any money.

"The law merely allows educators to choose to follow the state law first when there is a conflict between state and federal law; it does not mandate them to do so," Bridgewater said. "Only schools serving low-income populations will have to wrestle over state and federal standards."

### NCLB from page 1

The NWEA study claims it traced student academic growth in a way that other studies have not. Instead of examining test scores at a single point during the year, it examined how well students performed at the start and end of the school year to determine how much they had learned during the year.

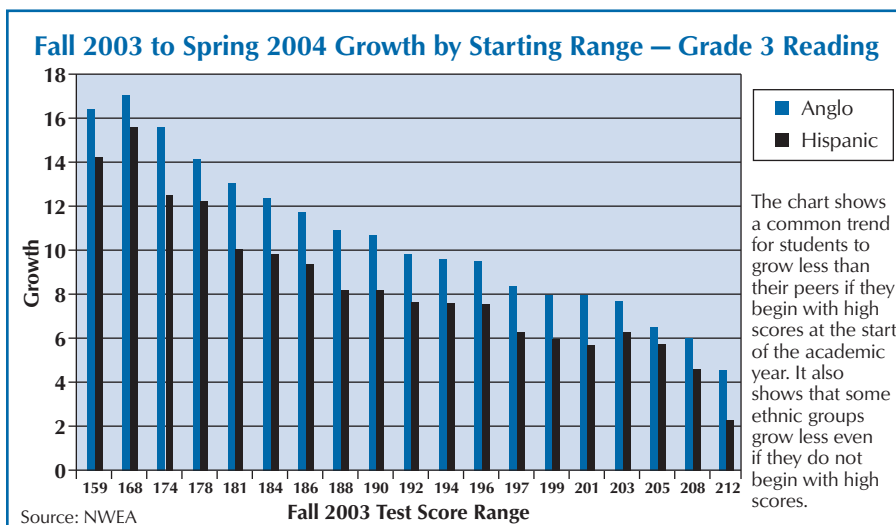
Using this approach, NWEA discovered that test scores on its exams did, in fact, go up from one year to the next under NCLB, typically by less than a point. The reason successive classes appear to do a little better than those before them, however, may be that younger students have grown up during a time of more regular test-

ing than their immediate predecessors. In other words, they are just better test takers, the researchers said.

The National Education Association, the nation's largest teachers' union, said some of the shortfalls of NCLB have been obvious from its implementation. Teachers across the country are obliged to spend more time trying to get their students to pass tests, for example, than on creative endeavors that allow students to think outside the box.

"We believe that the law has caused more bureaucracy and paperwork, less money spent in the classroom and on fewer things that are actually needed," said Vanessa Lilly, public relations officer for the teachers' organization. "The law is, in fact, an unfunded mandate, and we want the resources in the classroom," Lilly said.

The new report from NWEA is available at <http://www.nwea.org/research/nclbstudy.asp>.



# NEA, three states sue for more NCLB funding

The nation's largest teacher organization, the National Education Association (NEA), and school districts in Michigan, Texas and Vermont filed suit on April 21 to force the federal government to pay more of the costs of NCLB law.

The Bush administration "is mandating requirements but is not providing the funds to meet those requirements," said NEA President Reg Weaver.

NEA claims that the federal law aimed at boosting test scores was underfunded by \$27 billion, forcing districts to divert resources or risk being shut down. Research studies in Texas and Ohio estimate compliance costs of as

much as \$1.5 billion and \$1.2 billion, per state, NEA said.

President Bush has described the law, passed by Congress in December 2001 and signed into law in January 2002, as "the cornerstone" of his administration.

The U.S. Department of Education can sanction schools if students do not make adequate progress, and can require districts with unacceptable test scores to pay for tutoring and teacher education, to replace staff, and to extend the school day or year. If schools fail to improve, the federal government can order them to close and to be run as charter schools.

Costs to schools include hiring tutors and special-education teachers, and paying for classroom materials and data management to boost test scores, as mandated by the federal law. Each state must set standards, and schools have to report scores for many categories of students.

U.S. Department of Education spokeswoman Susan Aspey called the lawsuit "regrettable." In an e-mailed statement, she said studies have asserted the law is appropriately funded and "not a mandate." She also said states across the nation are showing strong gains in student achievement since the law was enacted.

## Feds seek comment about amended IDEA regulations

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) is seeking public comment on the upcoming draft of regulations for the newly amended Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

First enacted three decades ago, IDEA provides federal dollars to assist states and local communities in providing educational opportunities for approximately six million students with varying degrees of disability. The new legislation, reauthorized in December 2004, aims to build on the reforms of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act, including parental choice and academic results for students, while addressing other issues that ensure a quality education for children with disabilities.

This summer, the department will host a series of public hearings across the country, where individuals will have the opportunity to make comments, including one close-by, which is to be held on June 29. The meeting will run from 1 to 4 p.m., and 5 to 7 p.m., at the Palmer House Hilton,

Empire Room, 17 East Monroe Street, in Chicago

Suggestions about the changes may also be submitted electronically, via e-mail, to [comments@ed.gov](mailto:comments@ed.gov). Please include "Comments on IDEA 2004" in the subject line of the message.

For specifics about the other public hearings as well as guidelines for the input process, visit the department's Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 Web page at [www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/idea2004.html). Or direct questions to OSERS at (202) 245-7468.



## State endeavors to improve special ed alternate indicators

The state recently made available revised Alternate Performance Indicators (APIs) for teachers who administer the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA). The APIs now accessible at [www.isbe.net/assessment/iaa.htm](http://www.isbe.net/assessment/iaa.htm) will assist teachers in planning Individualized Education Programs (IEP), a requirement under federal special education law.

The APIs are a list of skills that teachers can use to help students with significant cognitive disabilities access the Illinois Learning Standards and show progress over time on specific tasks or activities.

In the 2005-2006 school year, grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 will take the Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) in reading and mathematics; grades 4 and 7 will take the IAA in science; and grade 11 will take the IAA in reading, mathematics and science.

The Illinois Alternate Assessment is designed for students with severe cognitive disabilities. For more information, email at [mleveque@isbe.net](mailto:mleveque@isbe.net) or call Marilyn Leveque at 217/782-4823.

# Illinois well represented at 65th NSBA conference

The 65th annual conference of the National School Board Association was held April 16-19 in San Diego. The four-day event drew nearly 15,000 registrants, including 427 individuals representing 118 Illinois districts.

This year's keynote speakers included former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

IASB staff, executives and officers were involved in many conference activities.

Angie Peifer, director of board development, Cathy Talbert, senior director of policy services, and Sandy Gundlach, director of field services, facilitated a pre-conference workshop, "Targeting Student Learning: Focusing on the Real Work of Boards." Gundlach reprised a shorter version for 165 people on Sunday.

That same day, John Cassel, director of field services, joined a colleague from the Kentucky School Boards Association to lead a workshop on "The Critical Role of Boards in a Democracy." Assisting was IASB director Mark Metzger, of **Indian Prairie CUSD 204**, Naperville.

IASB and 21 other state associations on Saturday participated in a job fair for prospective superintendent candidates.

Donna Johnson, Dawn Miller,

David Love, directors of field services, and Douglas Blair, senior director of field services for IASB, met with candidates to discuss certification requirements, the application process and strategies for job placement. Miller later joined association staff from four other states to present a panel on seeking a new superintendent.

## Illinois districts showcased

This year's "Share the Success" panels, showcasing local districts and their successful strategies, included nine Illinois districts:

- **Marion CUSD 2** shared the process it has used to define the roles of the board and administration in long-range planning.
- **Palatine CCSD 15**, a 2003 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award winner, explained how Baldrige helped their district to turn leaders into motivators and mentors. Participating were superintendent



From left, Executive Director Mike Johnson, President Ray Zimmerman, Vice President Marie Slater and Immediate Past President Christy Coleman appear on stage during the first general session at the NSBA conference in San Diego to be acknowledged by NSBA Executive Director Anne Bryant, right, for IASB's donation of \$150,000 to the Center for Public Education.

Robert A. McKanna and board president Louis A. Sands.

- **Lake Park HSD 108** of Roselle explained how the district and community passed a \$45 million referendum. Participants included superintendent John Butts and board members Bob Marino and Barbara Layer.
- **Brookwood SD 167** of Glenwood presented "Risk Watch," an injury prevention program aligned to state and national certification standards. Superintendent Steven Racz and board member Terry Campbell took part.
- **Chicago SD 299** presented its "Virtual Pre-K" program, a video and



NSBA Conference-goers enjoy mild weather while walking to and from the San Diego Convention Center.



Bob Marino, Lake Park CHSD 108 board member, Roselle, explains the campaign process that helped district voters to pass a \$45 million building referendum. Assisting in the presentation is superintendent John Butts.





IASB field service directors (from l-r) Dawn Miller, Donna Johnson and Dave Love talk with prospective superintendent candidates at the executive job fair.

Web-based resource to help parents and teachers improve student readiness.

- **Northbrook ESD 27** explained how to increase student achievement in science literacy. Showcasing their electronic curriculum product were board members Todd Heller and Jennifer Warner.
- **SD 45 DuPage County** of Villa Park demonstrated how to utilize the district's strategic plan to benchmark school improvement efforts. Board member Janet Tucker, and superintendent William Schewe were presenters.
- **Joliet SD 86** presented its panel on goal setting for academic improvement. Superintendent Phyllis Wilson participated.
- **Aurora East USD 131** presented examples of how committees have improved the work of their board. Participating were superintendent Michael Radakovich and board members Larry Malaker, Juanita Wells, Bob McCue, and Carol Farnum.

Four other Illinois districts were among the 111 projects showcased in the annual Exhibition of School Architecture. Among the 11 citation winners was the Chicago-based firm OWP/P, for its design of Claremont Academy in **Chicago District 299**. Other Illinois districts, and architects were:

- **Lake Zurich CUSD 95**, Legat Architects, Inc., Waukegan
- **Lake Village CCSD 41**, OWP/P, Chicago
- **Valley View CUSD 365U**, Wight &

Company, Darien

The "Board-walk of Excellence" featured 15 districts from around the nation that demonstrated top academic programs. Representing Illinois were:

• **Sycamore**

**CUSD 427**, which discussed its extended-day learning opportunities.

- **Elem SD 159** of Matteson and **Dolton West SD 148** of Riverdale discussed their collaborative multi-district approach to improve student achievement with a shared computer network and software products.

At an awards luncheon Monday, the American School Board Journal presented its 2005 Magna Awards to 26 school districts. Organized to advance student learning through board leadership, the awards "recognize student achievement and community engagement efforts." Earning Honorable Mentions were:

- **School District 45**, Villa Park, Ill., for its "Adopt-a-School — A Personal Touch" program
- **Sherrard Community Unit School District 200**, Orion, Ill., for its "Fostering Accountability with Strategic Systems"

**Other Illinois highlights**

At the Delegate Assembly, Joan Schmidt, a Montana board member, assumed the presidency of NSBA for 2005-06. IASB president Ray Zimmerman of Flanagan serves on the NSBA sergeants-at-arms committee, while past president Christy Coleman of Geneseo serves on the national policy and resolutions committee.

Two IASB Service Associate members — Siemens Building Technologies, Inc., of Buffalo Grove, and OWP/P architects of Chicago — were among the 300 exhibitors.

IASB executive director Michael

D. Johnson participated in a town hall-style meeting on Monday where state associations outlined federal policy and political directions regarding No Child Left Behind.

Tariq Butt, the IASB director representing Chicago Public Schools, was elected to a three-year term on the national steering committee for the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE).

The Conference's 5<sup>th</sup> annual 5K Run/Walk drew more than 600 participants on Sunday morning. There were 22 runners and 23 walkers from Illinois.

For more information about Illinois events and participants, visit the *May Newsbulletin* link on IASB's Web site at: <http://www.iasb.com/files/nb0505.htm>.

For more conference information, visit NSBA's Web site at: <http://www.nsba.org/>. The 2006 NSBA conference will be held April 8-11 in New Orleans, La.



Superintendent William Schewe, SD 45, DuPage County in Villa Park, talks about his district's strategic planning process, which is rooted in stakeholder involvement.

Get Online Update for free by registering at [www.iasb.com/elinks.cfm](http://www.iasb.com/elinks.cfm)

## IASB now seeks nominations for Association's top officers

The 2005 Nominating Committee of the Illinois Association of School Boards is seeking candidates for the offices of president and vice president.

The following criteria will be used in considering nominees: 1) leadership experience and general participation in IASB activities, 2) leadership experience on the local school board, 3) involvement with other education-related associations or organizations, 4) other leadership experiences, and 5) special talent or interests of benefit to IASB.

Nominating forms are due by early August, and candidates will be interviewed in that same month. A slate of candidates will be presented to the Delegate Assembly meeting in Chicago.

To request necessary forms, contact IASB.

## School board coverage key to newspaper contest

The annual Illinois Press Association contest is seeking entries from newspapers and reporters for "Best School Board Coverage." IASB sponsors the Best School Board Coverage category for excellent reporting that emphasizes the community's connection with its local public school district.

Winners are presented with the Robert M. Cole Award. It is intended for general circulation newspapers that cover local districts or schools to submit their own entries. IASB asks school boards and superintendents, however, to encourage those people or newspapers who they believe do outstanding work to enter.

The deadline for submitting entries is Friday, June 3. Winners will be announced on Friday, Oct. 14. For more information, call IPA at 217/241-1300.

# IASA honors Rosborg, Everett; elects Tinder as president

"Stand Up for Public Education — The Heart of Our Democracy" was the theme of the 2005 Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), held in Springfield, April 27-29.

The conference drew more than 650 school administrators to the capital city. Attendees included school superintendents, assistant superintendents, state agency staff, and college professors of educational administration.

**Belleville** District 118 Superintendent Jim Rosborg, and Illinois Association of School Business Officials' executive director Ron Everett, were awarded the Exemplary Service to Education Award at a recognition ceremony.

This is the second year the award has been given by the 1,200-member organization of public school district superintendents and executives.

Randy Dunn, interim State Superintendent of Education, spoke Friday about significant non-legislative issues he is confronting at ISBE. Dunn said he is working with the U.S. Depart-

Interim state superintendent Randy Dunn spoke at the IASA conference about the current legislative session and future directions for ISBE.



ment of Education on a new state accountability plan in connection with the No Child Left Behind Act, noting that the new U.S. Secretary of Education understands the need for changes.

In other action from the conference, an embattled superintendent from **Sauk Village** schools who is under investigation over misspent funds kept his seat on the IASA governing board. But CCSD 168 Supt. Thomas Ryan withdrew his name from candidacy for president of the IASA just prior to the conference.

Randolph Tinder, Ryan's opponent, was unanimously elected IASA president on Wednesday at the annual event. Tinder is superintendent of **Forest Park** District 91.

## IASB Leadership changes

Three IASB Divisions have chosen new directors to replace those who departed from their local boards in April. They are:

Wabash Valley – **Carolyn Brooks**, West Richland CUSD 2

Kaskaskia – **Felton Jose**, Salem District 111

West Cook – **Joanne Zendol**, Berwyn South District 100

Those three replace outgoing directors: **Fred Clatfelter**, Wabash Valley Division; **Kent Kistler**, Kaskaskia Division; and **Donna Cech**, West Cook Division. The Lake County Division will not elect a new division director to replace **Thomas Hannigan** until the fall.

## RECENT IASB MAILINGS

IASB regularly sends informational materials to all member districts. Here is a list of such items recently mailed to representatives of your district. For more information about any item, contact your board president or district superintendent or get in touch with IASB.

**Illinois Council of School Attorneys' membership directory**, 4/28/05 sent to district superintendents.

**IASB School Code supplement pre-publication announcement, with order form**, 5/15/05 to board presidents and district superintendents.

# Districts win tax hikes, bond issues in 76 April referenda

As mentioned in the April *Newsbulletin*, voters approved 18 of 61 school tax increase referendums, and 10 of 25 bond issues in the April 5 consolidated general election.

Specifically, tax propositions were approved in: **Arcola** CUSD 306; Grass Lake District 36, **Antioch**; Oak Grove District 68, **Bartonville**; **Dalzell** District 98; **Deerfield** District 109; **Des Plaines** CCSD 62; **Glencoe** District 35; **Hamilton** District 328; **Harrison** District 36; LaGrange District 105, **LaGrange Park**; **Manhattan** District 114; **Matteson** Elementary District 162; **Momence** CUSD 1; **Ohio** CUSD 505; Orland District 135, **Orland Park**; Township HS District 211, **Palatine**; North Palos District 117, **Palos Hills**; and Kirby District 140, **Tinley Park**.

Seventeen of the 18 successful tax propositions involved education fund increases, while one of four operations and maintenance fund referendum won voter approval. The lone transportation fund proposal put forward was defeated in **East Aurora** District 131.

Voter passage of tax increase proposals may have come as particularly good news in the Arcola district, because it is listed on the state's latest "financial watch list." Two referendum winners appeared on the "early warning" list that signals the approach of major financial trouble.

Ten of the 43 tax propositions defeated this time, however, were for school districts that appear on the financial watch list. Eight other referendum defeats came in districts that appeared on the state's "early warning" list.

"This suggests that districts in the deepest need for a tax increase are the least likely to get one; and districts where voters are well disposed to support a tax increase rarely get into such deep financial trouble in the first place," said Ben Schwarm, associate execu-

tive director of governmental relations for IASB.

Bond issues were approved in: **Beecher** District 200U (which passed two bond propositions); **Belvidere** District 100; **Momence** CUSD 1; **Ohio** CUSD 505; Richland District 88A, **Crest Hill**; **Riverton** CUSD 14; **Rochester** CUSD 3A; **Summit Hill** District 161; and **Wauconda** CUSD 118.

Two of the four working cash proposals won voter approval, in **Beecher** District 200U, and **Ohio** CUSD 505. The other eight bond issues approved this time were for building bonds.

One of two school district consolidation plan was adopted. The plan will unite **Crescent City** CCSD 275 and Crescent-Iroquois HSD 252, **Crescent City**, on July 1. But voters rejected the proposed consolidation of **Carthage** CUSD 338, **Dallas City** CUSD 336, **LaHarpe** CUSD 335 and **Nauvoo-Colusa** CUSD 325 in Hancock County.

Voters in **Arlington Heights** District 25 agreed to increase the debt service extension base under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL), commonly known as the tax caps law, for payment of principal and interest on limited bonds. Likewise, voters increased the extension limitation under the PTELL for Kaneland District 302, **Maple Park**. Three other PTELL questions were voted down.

Meanwhile, voters in four districts — **Lemont-Bromberek** District 113A; Elementary District 159, **Matteson**; C.C. District 180, **Burr Ridge**; and **Matteson** Elementary District 162 — abolished the offices of Township Treasurer and Trustee.

Voters also empowered **Matteson** Elementary District 162 to issue \$18 million in bonds for the purpose of paying claims against the district as permitted under state law by Article 19 (Sections 19-8 to 19-14, inclusive) of the Illinois School Code.

## NEWS HEADLINES

The board of Antioch-Lake Villa High School District 117 denies the request of a **home-schooled student** to play high school soccer. School officials note that usually only full-time students can participate in extracurricular activities (*Arlington Heights Daily Herald*, March 28) ... Some 2,700 students in Normal receive new fitness profiles for use in the "New P.E.," a national schooling movement launched there by ISU professor Dale Brown. The aim is to teach students lifelong healthy exercise habits rather than sports skills (*The Pantagraph*, Bloomington, March 27) ... A new at-home health study uses an exercise video called "Dance Dance Revolution" to fight childhood obesity. The West Virginia Public Employees Insurance Agency is funding it aiming to reduce health insurance claims (*The Associated Press*, April 2) ... School administrators in Galesburg CUSD 205 on April 11 recommend joining a **lawsuit against NCLB**. Two Ottawa-area districts filed a federal lawsuit in February seeking to clarify contradictions between NCLB and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (*The Register-Mail*, Galesburg, April 10) ... West Virginia legislators vote to make **English the official language** of the state (*The Associated Press*, April 12) ... Financial irregularities turn up in a routine audit in CCSD 168, Sauk Village, including checks allegedly issued from district accounts to pay for college tuition for the superintendent's daughter (*The Daily Southtown*, Chicago, March 30) ... A student brings an oddly large burrito to school in Clovis, New Mexico, causing the school to lock down after it is mistaken for a weapon (April 29, *The Associated Press*).

# Teacher, school board members earn 'Those Who Excel' awards

A high school french teacher's passionate commitment to teaching and ability to get students enthused earned her the Illinois Teacher of the Year award on April 16.

Jacque Bolger, who has taught at Hononegah CHSD 207 in Rockton for the past 24 years, received the award, which is part of the Those Who Excel program. She teaches five courses a day and is her school's only french teacher.

Teacher of the Year award criteria include student success achieved through application of the Illinois Learning Standards.

Bolger was chosen from seven finalists. She and about 300 other educators, staff, parents and community volunteers were honored as part of the 31st annual event.

"It's incredible when you think of all the excellent teachers we have, not only at Hononegah, but across the state," says Bolger, who has taught for 33 years.

Those Who Excel recognizes those who have made outstanding contributions to Illinois education, and is presented annually by the Illinois State Board of Education. Award recipients were nominated by their local schools and by people in their communities.

The Teacher of the Year serves as the state's ambassador for teaching



Jacque Bolger and student

and represents Illinois in the National Teacher of the Year program.

Other winners in this year's Those Who Excel program included the seven school board members listed below.

- |  |              |
|--|--------------|
| <b>Mari A. Carlson</b><br>Warren THSD 121,<br>Gages Lake | Recognition  |
| <b>Lisa Hunsche</b><br>Highland CUSD 5                   | Recognition  |
| <b>Larry Malaker</b><br>Aurora East District 131         | Recognition  |
| <b>Pat Priniski</b><br>CUSD 95, Lake Zurich              | Appreciation |
| <b>Sharon R. Rothe</b><br>Bethalto CUSD 8                | Merit        |
| <b>Debra Strauss</b><br>THSD 211, Palatine               | Merit        |
| <b>Peter W. Wilkinson</b><br>Sterling CUSD 5             | Excellence   |

Source: ISBE.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**June 2-4 – Basics of School District Governance and Basics of School Law & Finance**, 1-5 pm 6/2/05, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm 6/3/05 – 6/4/05, Holiday Inn City Centre, Chicago

**June 2 – Illini Division Summer Governing Meeting**, 6:30 pm, The Historic Lincoln Lodge, Urbana

**June 3 – Comprehensive Workshop for Board Presidents**, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm, Holiday Inn City Centre, Chicago

**June 9-11 – Basics of School District Governance and Basics of School Law & Finance**, 1-5pm 6/9/05, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm 6/10/05 & 6/11/05, Crowne Plaza, Springfield

**June 10 – Comprehensive Workshop for Board Presidents**, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm, Crowne Plaza, Springfield

**June 14 – Two Rivers Summer Governing Meeting**, 6:30 pm, Red Dome, Pittsfield

**June 17 – IASB offices closed**, all-staff meeting 8 a.m., Springfield

**June 18 – Basics of School Law and Finance**, 8:30 am – 3:30 pm, DoubleTree, Chicago Alsip

**June 23-25 – NSBA Trainers Conference**, Chicago

**July 4 – Independence Day**

**August 26-27 – IASB Board of Directors Retreat**, Oak Brook

For more information about coming events see the IASB Web site at [www.iasb.com/calendar/](http://www.iasb.com/calendar/)



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