

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD *Newsbulletin*

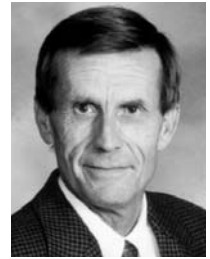
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IASB Field Services Director John Cassel, left, makes a point about balancing values at a LeaderShop Academy Symposium in June. Participants in the discussion included: Jerry Kinney, Debra Warning, Anders Dillner, Chris Ambrosini and Howard Butters (see story on page 4).

John J. Mannix, IASB associate executive director, dies July 26

John J. Mannix, associate executive director of the Illinois Association of School Boards, died Wednesday, July 26, after a year-long battle with cancer.



John Mannix

Mannix, 57, joined the Association staff on May 6, 2002, after serving on the IASB Board of Directors for eight years as representative of the Illinois Association of School Trustees. He served as a school trustee for Worth Township in suburban Alsip, Ill.

During his tenure at IASB, Mannix supervised the Field Services staff and operations in both the Springfield and Lombard offices. In addition, he was the lead advocate for the Association's response to the No Child Left Behind Act, helping to create a NCLB toolkit of IASB services for districts.

He also started and supervised the Comiskey Room at the Joint Annual Conference, which showcased Association staff, products and services. Mannix also coordinated the annual

Illinois faces diversion of Title I funds over select NCLB assessments

Illinois is one of 10 states the U.S. Department of Education plans to withhold a major portion of state administrative funds from for failing to fully comply with the testing provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act.

If plans are not altered, this could mean more direct school funding from the federal government. The federal funds in question, totaling \$540,228, or 10 percent of all Title I administrative funding earmarked for Illinois this year, may instead be granted

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directly to school districts. The state is permitted to appeal the federal action, which if overruled, means the decision to divert funds could be overturned in a few weeks.

State spokesperson Meta M. Minton was dismayed by the federal finding. "Like many states, Illinois has

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State hires search firm to help hire next state superintendent



Randy Dunn

The Illinois State Board of Education voted on July 6 to hire a private search firm to locate a replacement for State Superintendent of Education Randy Dunn, who recently announced he will step down on Dec. 1 to lead Murray State University.

The national search for Dunn's successor will be led by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates Ltd. The search is expected to cost up to \$45,000 and take seven months, culminating in the naming of a new superintendent by Feb. 28.

Adding potential hurdles to the search is the current race for governor between incumbent Democrat Rod Blagojevich and Republican Judy Baar Topinka. Regardless of who wins the race, state law requires the governor to have a say in replacing Dunn and the slate of state board members whose terms end in January. It is possible that five new state board members could join in the search late during the process.

"The timing is not perfectly synched between the election and when someone might be available and when a governor's staff vets whoever we've chosen," explained board member Joyce Karon of Barrington.

To keep the search process moving forward as the election unfolds, board members and others involved will "keep both camps informed as to where we're going," Karon said.

The state agency could be without a leader for at least three months.

The search for a new state schools chief was expected to move into high gear after Aug. 1, the date when state board members were scheduled to meet with search firm representatives, according to the state agency.

Ombudsman would help districts with compliance, administration

Saying one of the first things he had pledged to do as State Superintendent was to create an ombudsman position at ISBE to help school districts cut through red tape, Randy Dunn announced in June he is ready to do just that. "I am creating the position of School District Liaison out of my office to serve in this capacity," Dunn said.

The liaison will be working primarily as an ombudsman for local school districts that are dealing with ISBE on some issue. After working through all the channels, up through the agency's divisions and not getting what they would deem an acceptable response, superintendents and senior district personnel can utilize the person in this role for one last attempt at resolution of the problem or issue.

"Right now, these final prayers and petitions come to me and—as you know—I try to work many of these, but some also get lost in the wave of ongoing demands. In creating this position, I'm trying to ensure that all district concerns get shepherded through the system," Dunn explained.

He said the liaison may also be

asked to pick up the gauntlet for other constituencies, such as the ROEs (in conjunction with the ROE Services Administrator) or the Departments/Schools/Colleges of Education across the state. "But the lion's share of time and effort in this role will be in ombudsman services for local school districts and their superintendents," Dunn said.

"My plan is to utilize a person in this role who has a strong background as a local school and district administrator, as well as experience with the agency and in other educational settings," Dunn said. "I want to also use this position to improve our communications directly with the superintendents across Illinois. I will probably institute an occasional electronic 'Superintendent's Letter' or something to that effect shortly after July 1—when most of the state's first-time and changing superintendents are in their new chairs for the 2006-07 school year," Dunn added.

Dunn's office put out an RFSP on June 29 to fill the ombudsman post, and hopes to have someone on board very soon.

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.

2006 Digest of Bills Passed, 6/6/06 to board presidents and district superintendents.

2006 Joint Annual Conference announcement, 6/9/06 to district superintendents.

School Code mailing, 6/21/06 to board presidents and district superintendents.

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

Illinois Association of School Boards

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'High School Challenge' looks at diploma value in real world

When it comes to academic development, high school students in the United States allegedly are not progressing as rapidly as their peers in other developed countries.

More than 450 teachers, curriculum directors, and school leaders from across Illinois gathered in Bloomington on June 19 and 20 for a state-wide conference to discuss why that is, and what they can do about it.

The conference, "High School Challenge: Rigor and Relevance Meet Reality," focused on testing, trends, and the meaning of a high school diploma today.

Kati Haycock, a child advocate and director of the California-based research and education advocacy group Education Trust, encouraged participants to think hard about who teaches what to whom.

Scheduling decisions are sometimes made based on adult preferences not student benefit, she said.

Sometimes good teachers are rewarded with the best students. But schools need to ensure that kids who need help most get the best teachers in rigorous core subjects, she said. She suggested that all teachers should tackle a mix of high-level and lower-level classes.

As for the "achievement gap" between minority and low-income students and others, Haycock said significant advancements are being made in elementary schools. There is also some progress in middle schools, but the gap is still widening in high schools, she maintained.

"Most of the ideas (at the conference) reinforce what we've learned at past conferences and know from our gut," added Tom Eder, Normal Community West High School principal.

Waiver requests facing deadlines for fall 2006

Applications for waivers of School Code mandates – such as modifications to administrative rules, or school calendar mandates – to be considered by the General Assembly during the Fall 2006 legislative session must be sent to the Illinois State Board of Education postmarked by Friday, Aug. 11. By law, school districts may request a waiver or modification of the mandates of state laws or regulations when the school district demonstrates it can meet the intent of the particular mandate in a "more effective, efficient, or economical manner or when necessary to stimulate or improve student performance."

If the state board fails to disapprove a request, the request is deemed granted, but requests that are disapproved may be appealed to the legislature, which sometimes overturns the administrative ruling. By law, waivers cannot be allowed from laws, rules, and regulations regarding special education, eligibility of voters in school elections, or teacher tenure, certification or seniority. Nor can waivers be granted pertaining to No Child Left Behind requirements.

The deadline for school districts to submit the waiver requests was recently moved up by Public Act 94-198, effective Jan. 1, 2006, in order to better coincide with legislative deadlines for making determinations under the law. The law moved up the spring deadline for submission of requests for waivers of School Code mandates for the General Assembly's consideration from May 1 to March 1. In order to meet that deadline, applications for waivers of School Code mandates to be considered by the General Assembly during the Spring 2007 session must be sent to the State Board postmarked by Friday, Jan. 12, 2007.

If school leaders are applying for

See **WAIVER** on page 5

Rigorous curriculum is urged to make students 'competitive'

An official with the U.S. Department of Education says American high schools need to be more competitive. Deputy Secretary Raymond Simon of the U.S. Department of Education made that assertion to teachers and administrators at the High School Challenge conference in Bloomington on June 19.

He said high schools need to focus more on math, science and elective courses that continue to challenge students.

Simon praised No Child Left Behind. He said the program has better prepared elementary students for high school. He stated that a rigorous high school education is the single most important factor that determines whether or not someone graduates from college.

Citing a lesson he learned on the job in his youth, Simon said a professional can make room where there is no room, indicating that schools can do the same thing under the No Child Left Behind Act.

But Simon admitted there is room for improvement in the federal law. "We want to make the law work so we don't lose sight of the mission," he said.

Also speaking at the event was Ed Rust, CEO of State Farm Insurance and vice chairman of a statewide business group known as the Illinois Business RoundTable. Rust said education is the number one economic issue in the world today.

An overview of the group's positions on education reform is available online at: <http://www.illinoisbusinessroundtable.com/>.

Symposium explores public values, decisions

LeaderShop Academy members learn how to balance interests

Twenty-eight school leaders attended the 2006 School Board LeaderShop Academy Symposium on June 10 in Springfield, where they heard and learned about “The Art of Public Leadership and the Science of Public Decision Making.”

With the purpose of developing a better understanding of what boards do and why, participants heard from Phillip Boyle, president, Leading and Governing Associates, Inc., and later practiced their own skills in several public problem-solving exercises.

According to Angela Peifer, Senior Director of School Board Development for IASB, the workshop was designed to help participants to:

- Use public values to frame public problems, choices and decisions.
- Articulate their personal viewpoints in a way that affirms what they are for, in addition to what they are against, and to make room for and engage people with different perspectives.
- Understand how citizens, community groups and fellow board members use public values to talk about problems and choices, and how value preferences influence how problems look and which solutions appear most attractive.
- Understand how good choices can affirm public values rather than simply trading one for another.
- Use public values to facilitate community conversations, solve problems, and make choices that build schools and communities.

Boyle, who teaches public management and government in university graduate programs and for local elected officials, said decision-making comes down to balancing four basic public values: liberty, community, prosperity, and equality. “You have to be able to build a public confidence in the system,” Boyle said. “This cre-

ates a larger good and a sense of ownership and belonging” for everyone.

Public schools, he said, are a perfect “laboratory” for balancing public values, which makes them ripe for major public conflict when decisions are made that pick one value to the exclusion of others. “This happens no matter which one (value) you choose,” Boyle explained.

However, it’s the natural tension occurring between these competing values that keeps elected officials honest as governors. “Your job is to figure out and filter them and determine a greater good and interest from all four,” he said.

The Symposium continued with practical application of the value-balancing principles. Participants were given various topics to discuss and rationalize. The issues included bilingual education, minority scores in federal test data, school calendars, textbook selection, and class ranking.

In addition, IASB Vice President Mark C. Metzger delivered a plenary address, using a variety of magic tricks and audio-visual descriptions of transformational or “A-Ha” moments in his own family life to explain how critical individual perspectives and perceptions are in the decision-making process.

“We need to help the community have these moments,” he said. “It’s part of our job as elected officials.”

IASB President Marie Slater and several IASB staff members were also on hand to help with the event. Among the participants who attended the 2006 Symposium were:

- Chris Ambrosini**, Manhattan SD 114
- Howard Butters**, Manhattan SD 114
- Steve Clark**, Rock Island SD 41
- Anders Dillner**, Sullivan CUSD 300
- Sean Doyle**, Summit Hill SD 161
- Linda Eades**, Northwestern CUSD 2
- David Ernst**, Panhandle CUSD 2
- Paula Smith Feigenbaum**, Carbondale ESD 95



Presenter Phil Boyle, left, makes a point to David Ernst, of Panhandle CUSD 2, at the symposium.

- Gregory Frana**, Lyons Elem SD 103
- Jane Fredenhagen**, Princeton THSD 500
- Trena Glenn**, Olympia CUSD 16
- Dale Hansen**, Grant Park CUSD 6
- Ruth Hilvety**, Meridian CUSD 15
- Benjamin Hughes**, District 50, Washington
- Jerry Kinney**, Monmouth-Roseville CU 238
- Vicki LePere**, Millstadt CCSD 160
- Mark C. Metzger**, Indian Prairie CUSD 204
- Ron Pratl**, CHSD 218
- Bonnie Rateree**, W Harvey-Dixmoor SD 147
- Joanne Schaeffer**, Lyons Elem SD 103
- Marie Slater**, Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200
- Michael Smith**, W Harvey-Dixmoor SD 147
- Barbara Somogyi**, Elk Grove CCSD 59
- Dane Tippet**, Triad CUSD 2
- Debra Warning**, Minooka CHSD 111
- Julie Williamson**, Neoga CUSD 3
- Eugene Wroblewski**, Argo CHSD 217
- Sylvia Zielke**, Richland SD 88A

The Symposium is offered every other year as one of the benefits of belonging to IASB’s School Board LeaderShop Academy. School board members who participate in this continuous learning and professional development program will be able to earn and maintain membership in the Academy. This designation promotes and recognizes board members who work their way through the School Board LeaderShop curriculum.

For more information about School Board LeaderShop, curriculum offerings or the Academy, contact Peifer at 217/528-9688, ext. 1124, or visit the IASB Web site at <http://iasb.com/leadershop.htm>.

WAIVER *from page 3*

a modification of School Code mandates (such as legal school holidays), or a waiver or a modification of administrative rules, there is no postmark deadline; approval must be granted, however, before a modification can be implemented.

The process for applying for a modification of the School Code; a waiver of State Board rules; or a modification of State Board rules is the same process used in applying for a waiver of a School Code mandate.

Applicants are encouraged to submit those petitions that address calendar issues to the State Board before the calendars affected by the requests are submitted for review. Under the provisions of Public Act 93-1036, schools will need to submit an amended calendar to their Regional Office of Education and have it approved before any calendar modification granted by ISBE can be implemented.

Public Act 94-198, meanwhile, amended Section 27-6 of the School Code, adding an exception to the daily physical education requirement for school districts implementing block schedules. Due to this change, districts will no longer need to apply for or renew a modification of Section 27-6 in order to offer physical education to their students on a block schedule.

The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance played a central role in pushing for the passage of the waiver law that took effect in 1995.

Since August 2003 the waiver law has required an applicant with a governing board (i.e., school district, joint agreement, or ISC) to hold the public hearing on a day other than the day of a regular board meeting. All applicants must provide written notification about the hearing to their state legislators as well as to their affected exclusive collective bargaining agent(s) and must publish a notice in a newspaper of general circulation.

For more information, visit ISBE's waiver information Web site at <http://www.isbe.state.il.us/isbe-waivers/default.htm>.

NEWS HEADLINES

Chicago (June 20, *Chicago Tribune*) Mayor Richard Daley pushed for a year-round public school calendar as he unveiled an experimental summer school program on June 19. The pilot program will operate at 10 elementary schools in the Englewood neighborhood this year.

Deer Park (June 21, *Chicago Tribune*) The Deer Park CCSD 82 Board of Education will consider a policy to establish eligibility guidelines concerning students hoping to be named valedictorian or salutatorian. The new policy to be proposed to the elementary school board will state that a student with an Individual Education Plan is only eligible for the valedictorian or salutatorian honor when working closely to his or her grade level. Criteria used in the proposal are supported by court rulings.

Libertyville (June 28, *News Sun*, Libertyville) Libertyville's downtown merchants recently joined in an ongoing effort by a group of concerned Libertyville residents and former alumni to preserve the former Libertyville Township High School.

Lincolnshire (June 21, *The Daily Herald*, Arlington Heights) Lake County's largest high school has eliminated student class rank. Officials said the school board made the move in an effort to focus less on academic competition. Starting this school year, transcripts sent out will show student grade point averages and the percentile range where they fall within their class.

Lockport (June 28, *Chicago Sun-Times*) Lockport Township High School may hold a separate graduation ceremony in January to alleviate crowding at the June 2007 graduation. The board was scheduled to consider that move at its July 17 meeting.

Naperville (June 20, *The Daily*

Herald, Arlington Heights) Naperville CUSD 203 has eliminated academic class rank; the school board voted 5-2 on June 19 to make the change beginning in August with the Class of 2007.

Oswego (June 28, *Aurora Beacon News*) A new strategic plan in the district calls for at least 97 percent of Oswego students to meet standards on state tests by 2012. School officials presented an early draft of the proposal to the school board on June 27.

Palatine (June 20, *The Daily Herald*, Arlington Heights) A new formula recently approved by the board will change how Palatine-Schaumburg High School District 211 figures students' weighted grade point averages. Hoping to encourage students to take the courses they are interested in, regardless of whether they carry honors credits, the board voted to change the way the district factors in any honors or Advanced Placement classes.

Joliet (June 6, *Joliet Herald News*) The Troy School District's referendum was finally decided in court on June 2 when a judge ruled that the ballot measure passed. The referendum measure won by two votes on election night, but after some ups and downs involving absentee, provisional and grace-period ballots, a court had to finally decide the outcome.

Wheeling (June 16, *The Daily Herald*, Arlington Heights) After some deliberation, the Wheeling CCSD 21 board recently decided to continue rejecting federal Title I funds. The district voted last year to reject the estimated \$250,000 in Title I funding it would have received. Title I funds are the means by which the federal government has the authority to enforce the NCLB Act.

some serious misgivings about the Education Department's characterization of our assessment system," said Minton, speaking for the Illinois State Board of Education.

Illinois was one of eight states designated as "Approval Pending, Withholding Funds," resulting in the loss of 10 percent of their Title I, Part A state administrative funds. Two other states could lose 25 percent of such funds after being slapped with the designation "Not Approved."

The federal NCLB law requires states to hold math and reading tests in the third- to eighth-grade, and once in high school.

While all states imposed NCLB testing in the required grades, many faced significant difficulties, such as ensuring that tests were technically sound, or developing exams for disabled or limited-English students. In this case, the federal government claims Illinois did not meet NCLB requirements with regard to assessments for English Language Learners (ELL) and Students With Disabilities (SWD).

Illinois State Superintendent of Education Randy Dunn responded by saying that the state has made major progress in these areas. "It is not surprising that so many states continue to wrangle with this issue as experts and researchers still disagree on many

large aspects of the process.

"Perhaps this is the reason why no clear guidelines have been set forth by the feds in these areas; however, such only adds to the confusion as states work to comply with an unclear set of NCLB requirements for ELLs and SWDs ..."

The latest federal regulatory finding on NCLB may signal a more stringent enforcement effort in support of the federal law, according to *Education Week*. In fact, the Illinois board had hoped to explain timing difficulties it claimed were crucial to the feds' finding of noncompliance, but federal officials would not hear of it.

"For us here in Illinois, the timing of the peer review itself led to difficulty," Dunn explained. "While (the federal department of education) approved our peer review for May 2006 — since we were debuting our new assessment system earlier this spring and that was the basis for the review — they claim in their notification to us that we failed to provide required materials when requested in April. Those materials, which could greatly affect our designation, were made available as soon as we could upon completion of testing and [they] are in the feds' possession at this time, to be reviewed in July as we understand.

"And because of the timing of our

peer review, we did not have the opportunity to respond to (the federal education department's) concerns before they made their designation as it seems some states were able to do," Dunn added.

Only 10 states have won full approval so far, but four others appear likely to win full approval soon.

Deputy Education Secretary Raymond Simon said the states' overall performances were positive. Even the 36 states whose approval remains pending probably will get the federal OK within a year, he said.

"I think maybe the scope of the work was just more broad, difficult and time-consuming than many of them thought," Simon said. "I don't think there was any attempt for them to sit back, do nothing and say, 'Let's see how much we can get away with.'"

States threatened with an immediate loss of money have 20 business days from the receipt of their letter to challenge the findings and submit additional data.

Besides having a portion of states' administrative funds diverted, states not in full compliance with NCLB testing provisions will not be allowed to seek additional flexibility under the NCLB law. (See related NCLB story below regarding minority subgroup size requirements used in reporting test scores under federal law.)

Debate will study threshold for subgroup testing

U.S. Deputy Education Secretary Raymond Simon recently announced that state officials will be summoned to a conference this fall to discuss minority subgroup size used in reporting test scores under the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

He said the aim is to ensure schools are omitting reports on students only when a group of students is so small that including its scores could give an inaccurate picture of a school's performance.

"We don't want false positives, we don't want false negatives," Simon



Dept. of Ed.
Secretary
Ray Simon

said after testifying to the House Committee on Education and the Workforce. "The better we can get at making the structure work correctly, then the more likely the children that need the services are going to get them."

Local and state education officials have taken issue with an Associated Press story published in April that suggested they might be exploiting some kind of "loophole" on subgroup size to get around No Child Left Behind

Act penalties. Apparently that story prompted the new federal scrutiny.

The story refers to the threshold at which schools are held responsible for the test performance of subgroups of students, particularly racial or ethnic groups. The law gives individual states the authority to set the number of students in a subgroup that triggers a school facing sanctions for an under-performing subgroup.

In Illinois, there needs to be 45 students in most non-performing subgroups to trigger sanctions, which can

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include allowing students to transfer to a better school in the district, providing supplemental services such as tutoring and, eventually, major restructuring of the school, such as replacing personnel.

Characterizing the threshold as a loophole left some with the impression, however, that individual districts could work with their data to make it look better.

But that is not the case, according to local school officials. School districts turn all of their testing data over to the Illinois State Board of Education, which produces the reports that are used to determine compliance with No Child Left Behind performance requirements. All student scores are turned over, and all schools and school districts are meeting state guidelines on testing and subgroups.

Experts say the subgroup size provision in the law was written primarily to protect children. Parents do not want their children to be able to be publicly identified by their test scores. If the number of any group is small enough, then individuals could be identified.

But the minimum size requirement for subgroup reporting also guards against statistical errors. Before NCLB was even signed, researchers Douglas Staiger and Thomas Kane discovered that year-to-year scores in schools varied greatly, particularly in any one grade. One year's students often scored higher or lower than the previous year's class for reasons that had little to do with anything the school did. They concluded that measuring year-to-year changes among groups smaller than about 67 would lead to misidentifying many schools as subject to NCLB sanctions.

Because NCLB penalizes schools that do not increase their scores sufficiently for every subgroup, using small groups makes it almost certain that schools will be labeled failing for what are no more than normal fluctuations in scores. Professor Walt Haney separately concluded that to ensure accuracy, group sizes should not be below 100.

\$10 million authorized for pilot project for smaller class sizes

A new law has set aside \$10 million for a pilot program aimed at reducing class sizes, but experts say the law will have little immediate impact on most of the crowded classrooms in the state.

State officials aim to lower class sizes in a handful of test schools, limiting classrooms to no more than 15 pupils in kindergarten through 3rd grade. Under the program, public schools can apply for funds that will be disbursed in \$50,000 grants schools could use to pay for teacher salaries and benefits.

Public Act 94-894, sponsored by Rep. Michael Smith (D-Canton) and Sen. Terry Link (D-Lake Bluff), created this pilot class-size reduction grant program. The law took effect on July 1, and is to be implemented and administered by the Illinois State Board of Education for grades K-3.

"These grants will ease the burden of schools in their focus on individualized learning ... that will make sure that Illinois students receive the attention vital to enhancing the learning process," said Rep. Smith.

Grants will be distributed among suburban, downstate, and Chicago public schools, and will be awarded to elementary schools to ensure class sizes of no more than 15 students. Schools will be required to use the funds to hire additional classroom teachers to decrease the number of pupils per class. The ISBE will track measures of student success, including assessment scores and attendance rate, in comparison to non-pilot program schools with larger classes.

The average class size in Illinois was 21 in kindergarten in 2005, and it was 21.5 in first grade, and 22 in 3rd grade. In high-growth school districts class sizes are much larger than average in some areas, including, for example: 26 kids per kindergarten class in West Harvey-Dixmoor in the south suburbs, 28 kids per first grade

class in Plainfield District 202, and 24 kids per third grade class in Chicago District 299.

Research indicates that cutting class size in early grades has a number of positive benefits for both students and teachers. It can lead to more in-depth coverage of each subject, more engaged students, fewer disci-

Grants will be distributed among suburban, downstate, and Chicago public schools, and will be awarded to elementary schools to ensure class sizes of no more than 15 students.

plinary problems, and a more personalized relationship between teacher and student. Kindergarten through third grades are shown to be most sensitive to the positive effects that are made possible through smaller class sizes, and nearly half of all states have begun to reduce those grades' class sizes as a result.

But again, the amount of money currently appropriated to cut class sizes may not make much of an impact. Wilson Elementary School in Cicero, for example, could hire only one new teacher, according to Supt. Clyde Senters of Cicero District 99.

Adding a teacher could cut the school's average class size to 23 from about 27, far short of the project's goal. Even with a grant or two, the district will likely have larger classes next year after a budget deficit forced the firing of about 60 teachers, Senters said.

"It needs to be bigger bucks, but it is what it is," he said. "We welcome any opportunity to try reducing class size."

Yet the cost of reducing class size to 15 "would be something I can't even fathom," Senters said.

Association sees retirements; adds new staffers

Hanson, Murray end service with sendoff

Several additional staff members have recently been hired to better serve the membership of the Illinois Association of School Boards, according to IASB Executive Director Dr. Michael D. Johnson. The new staff members are:

Holly Emery joined IASB as an Administrative Assistant in the Field Services Department on June 5, replacing Ashley Cooney. Cooney recently stepped down from the post to do missionary work abroad. Holly provides support to Dave Love and Nesa Brauer.

Julie Niewinski joined the Association on June 12 in the new position of Secretary II, in the Policy Services/Targeting Achievement through Governance department. Julie provides support to Anna Lovern and Debra Larson.

Jennifer Nelson joined IASB on June 19th. She replaced **Ellen Murray** as Manager of Information Services in the Communications Department. Murray retired after 12 years as Association librarian.

Nesa Brauer joined the staff on July 5th in the new position of Board Development Consultant, in the Field Services Department. She assists Angela Peifer in board training.

Sandra Kwasa joined the staff on July 6 as a Board Consultant, in the Field Services Department. Sandra works out of the Lombard office.

The Association's newest employee is **Natalie Donovan**, an Administrative Assistant in the Lombard office. Natalie began work on July 10 in place of the recently retired **Marion Hansen**. She assists Donna Johnson in the Field Services Department. Hansen worked for the Association for 25 years.

Johnson also recently upgraded the following staff members' positions with the Association: **Diane Cape**,



Marion Hansen receives a congratulatory plaque from Dr. Michael D. Johnson on behalf of IASB.



Ellen Murray also receives a commemorative plaque on her retirement from the Association from Dr. Michael D. Johnson.

from Director to Senior Director of Production Services; and **Bobbie Sturm**, from Secretary to Secretary II.

"These promotions recognize the many contributions these staff members have made in advancing the work of school boards and IASB," Johnson said.

In another development, it was announced on July 14 that Kevin Bell, an assistant director of governmental relations, will move from Springfield and will work out of the Lombard office, starting work there in mid-August. Bell will still work in the Capitol on most session days, but his presence in the suburban area will allow him to make regular visits to legislators' district offices and to keep in closer contact with suburban school districts.



Julie Niewinski



Nesa Brauer



Jennifer Nelson



Sandra Kwasa



Holly Emery

For a complete list of IASB staff or to contact a staff member by e-mail, visit the IASB Web site at: www.iasb.com/files/email.cfm.

Finding, using data topic for *Journal* issue

As data becomes increasingly more important in determining the direction of educational programs, school board members need to know where to find good sources of information as well as how to use data once it's available.

In the September/October issue of *The Illinois School Board Journal*,

Sandra G. Watkins and Donna S. McCaw, professors at Western Illinois University in Macomb, take a look at a fictitious board as it grapples with its role and the use of data to improve student achievement. In addition, other articles will look at data-rich Web sites and the feasibility of outsourcing district services.

Districts submit two dozen Delegate resolutions

Below are the proposed policy-setting resolutions for IASB that school boards have submitted for consideration at this year's Delegate Assembly. The Resolutions Committee will meet in August to make recommendations on each of the following numbered resolutions:

Resolution #1, Early Retirement – District Option, Jasper County CUSD 1 (*Wabash Valley Division*) Allow boards to determine if a teacher may use the Early Retirement Option (ERO).

Resolution #2, Capital Funding – For School Construction, CCSD 89 Glen Ellyn (*DuPage Division*) Support more money for school construction, including using state sales tax revenues.

Resolution #3, School Funding And Taxation Reform, Tuscola CUSD 301 (*Illini Division*) Partner with other state associations to push for school funding reform.

Resolution #4, Non-Resident Student Tuition, Freeburg CCSD 70 (*Southwest Division*) Shorten the length of time a non-resident student can attend a school without paying tuition.

Resolution #5, Annexing District Requirements, Triad CUSD 2 (*Southwest Division*) Revise IASB's current position statement on annexation to allow annexation of just a portion of a school district's territory.

Resolution #6, School Construction Grant Program, Triad CUSD 2 (*Southwest Division*) Ensure that, if a new school construction grant program begins, districts on the old program's waiting list get paid first.

Resolution #7, Property Tax Cap, Barrington CUSD 220 (*Lake Division*) Under property tax cap law, change the index used from the Consumer Price Index, to the Employment Cost Index.

Resolution #8, Consolidation Into Unit Districts, Barrington CUSD 220 (*Lake Division*) Require all school districts to be unit districts.

Resolution #9, School Construction Grant Index, Paris CUSD 4 (*Illini Division*) In the school construction grant program, allow "cooperative high schools" to use the highest grant index of any of the participating school districts.

Resolution #10, IEP Out-Of-Grade Level Assessment, Indian Prairie CUSD 204 (*DuPage Division*) Seeks changes in how special education students are assessed under NCLB.

Resolution #11, Public Health Crises, Schaumburg CCSD 54 (*North Cook Division*) Provides guidelines on how districts should prepare for avian flu and other health crises.

Resolution #12, Truth In Taxation, Marion CUSD 2 (*Shawnee Division*) Seeks changes in the truth-in-taxation law's notice requirement for taxing districts to adopt a levy.

Resolution #13, Zoning Hearing Participation, Waltham Elementary CCSD 185 (*Starved Rock Division*) Reaffirms IASB Position Statement 6.06 on Zoning Hearing Participation.

Resolution #14, School Board Member Employer Recognition, Marquardt SD 15 (*DuPage Division*) Calls for IASB to recognize employers who are supportive of employees who serve on school boards.

Resolution #15, Sales Tax for School Districts, East Peoria CHSD 309 (*Central Illinois Valley Division*) Allows districts to impose a retail sales tax.

Resolution #16, Property Tax Cap Expiration, East Peoria CHSD 309 (*Central Illinois Valley Division*) Reaffirms Position Statement 2.45 on an expiration date for tax caps.

Resolution #17, High School Exams, East Peoria CHSD 309 (*Central Illinois Valley Division*) Allows for including part of a state-mandated exam in high school graduation requirements.

Resolution #18, TIF Districts And Enterprise Zones, East Peoria CHSD 309 (*Central Illinois Valley Division*) Requires property owners in TIF districts and Enterprise Zones to continue paying the full share of property taxes to school districts.

Resolution #19, Bidding Contracts – Local Bidders, Pekin CHSD 303 (*Central Illinois Valley Division*) Gives an advantage to local bidders in a school district's competitive bidding process.

Resolution #20, Constitutional Convention Delegates, Rich THSD 227 (*South Cook Division*) Calls for IASB involvement in recruiting state constitutional convention candidates.

Resolution #21, Transition Fees For Annexation-Detachment, Ashton-Franklin CUSD 275 (*Northwest Division*) Seeks changes in how transition aid is calculated for districts that experience an annexation-detachment.

Resolution #22, School Board Member – Terms Of Office, Genoa-Kingston CUSD 424 (*Kishwaukee Division*) Changes the term for an out-going board member to the end of the current school year (instead of within 21 days of the April election).

Resolution #23, School Board Member – Compensation, Genoa-Kingston CUSD 424 (*Kishwaukee Division*) Calls for compensation for serving on a public school board.

Resolution #24, Constitutional Amendment On School Funding, Danville CUSD 118 (*Illini Division*) Supports passing a constitutional amendment to require the state to pay the majority of public education costs in the state.

The annual Delegate Assembly is IASB's major policy-setting mechanism for the Association. It consists of delegates chosen by IASB member boards to represent them, with each board entitled to send one delegate. The delegates gather at the Association's annual conference to vote on resolutions submitted by member districts in order to establish policy for IASB.

Field staff host trainers conference

IASB's Field Services staff hosted the 2005 National Trainers' Conference at the Hyatt Regency, Chicago, June 23-25. Seventy-eight school board association staff from thirty-two states, plus NSBA, attended the conference. The event featured a pre-conference workshop on Microsoft's new "Building 21st Century Schools" project; a general session on conflict management; and twelve different break-out sessions.



Workmen begin digging foundations for an addition to IASB headquarters in mid-July.

Building, budget part of action from IASB board of directors

IASB's Board of Directors at their last quarterly meeting reviewed plans for a modest expansion of the Springfield office as part of a plan for increased delivery of services. Staff had outgrown the facility, leading the Association to add offices, reconfigure conference room space, and add space to the warehouse room at the back of its headquarters facility.

Other action included approving an \$8,409,717 budget for 2006-07 that envisions a planned \$398,261 deficit, as part of the Association's business plan to add staff to gear up for greater delivery of services requested by districts. "The idea is to take some of our surplus and deliver it back to the membership in services," said Executive Director Dr. Michael D. Johnson.

The board also received a membership report showing the Association now has 852 member districts, representing 97.6 percent of all school districts in the state.

The Board also:

- Received a monitoring report on ends noting that IASB is in the second year of a \$30,000-per-year commitment to help develop NSBA's Center for Public Education Web site. The site is designed to serve

both the general public and school board members.

- Received monitoring reports on executive limitations that showed IASB has remained in full compliance with the provisions of a Board policy on budgeting and revenue forecasting.
- Received a staffing update noting Association plans for hiring two board consultants, one in Lombard and one in Springfield, to assist with board training. The update also called for the addition of one support staff position in Springfield in order to backup the new board consultant position there, and to support staff in the Targeting Achievement through Governance program.

The Board's next meeting and annual retreat is set for Aug. 25-26 at the Pheasant Run resort in St. Charles. At that time the Board will perform its annual evaluation of the executive director and will receive budgetary updates. The tentative agenda also calls for a look at further details of the Springfield office expansion and a review of the outcome of IASB's recent charity fund raiser aiding schools recently hit by gulf coast hurricanes.

NEWS FROM IASB

School Code, Law Survey orders being shipped

Two standard legal reference books are now being shipped by IASB, namely the *Illinois School Law Survey*, by Brian Braun, and the *Illinois School Code*, compiled by LexisNexis for IASB.

The complete new Ninth Edition of the *Illinois School Law Survey* (\$30 regular price, or \$25 for IASB members), and the *2006 Illinois School Code* (\$35, or \$30 for IASB members) are being released with CD-ROM versions that include useful indexes. Both are current for laws in force as of January 1, 2006.

The complete new editions of these books may be ordered from IASB Publications now at ext. 1108.

Journal editor to chair communications group

Linda Dawson, IASB director of editorial services and editor of *The Illinois School Board Journal*, has been elected chair of National School Boards Association's Council of School Board Association Communicators (COSBAC) for 2006-07.



Linda Dawson

More than 30 school board association communications staff members convened July 6-9 in Chicago for the annual COSBAC meeting that featured sessions on crisis communication, planning for a flu pandemic, education hot topics, e-newsletters and how to use independent research to tell education's story.

Serving as chair is the third part of a four-year commitment Dawson has made to the COSBAC executive board. Other officers for 2006-07 are Jennifer Rogers of Michigan, past-chair; David Brine of Washington, first vice-chair; and John Greely of Alaska, second vice-chair.

New law would pull driver's license from truants

A bill was signed into law on June 24 requiring minors to attend school regularly in order to keep their driver's license or learner's permit.

The new law authorizes the state to decline to issue or renew driving privileges for a teen who is a "chronic or habitual truant" – a student who misses 10 percent or more of the previous 180 school days.

"A driver's license is a privilege. And when students start abusing that privilege by skipping school, it becomes a problem," said Gov. Rod Blagojevich. "This bill gives students a strong incentive not to cut class."

The law, which took effect July 1, requires schools to provide the secretary of state's office with a quarterly list of students who have withdrawn, been expelled, or were certified as truants.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Bob Flider, D-Mount Zion, and Sen. Frank Watson, R-Greenville, is expected to reduce dropout rates and boost school attendance.

"Students need to know that there are consequences for their actions, and that this privilege will not be extended for those who choose to leave school before graduation," Flider said in a statement.

The bill exempts minors who fail to attend school due to illness, economics or family hardships. Those who are married, legally emancipated or are working toward their GED are also exempt.

In addition to HB 1463 (Public Act 94-916), the following bills have been signed by the governor and have become law:

- **HB 4310** (PA 94-0881) requires that newly elected school board members take an oath of office. Also adds duties with respect to the Superintendent by stating that the school board shall make all employment decisions pertaining to the Superintendent and shall direct, through policy and without limitation to, the superintendents administration of the district in such matters concerning budget, building plans, retention, dismissal of employees, selection of textbooks, instructional materials and courses of study. Provides that the school board shall evaluate the superintendent in his or her administration of the school board policies and stewardship of the assets of the district. Effective immediately.
- **HB 4782** (PA 94-845) prohibits a vehicle using diesel fuel with a Gross Vehicle Weight Rating of more than 8,000 pounds (including a school bus) from idling its engine for more than five minutes within any 60 minute period in the counties of Cook, DuPage, Lake, Kane,

McHenry, Will, Madison, St. Clair, Monroe and townships in Grundy and Kendall. Provides for certain exemptions to these requirements. Effective July 1, 2006.

- **SB 2191** (PA 94-929) expands consumer education to provide that the instruction must include an understanding of the basic concepts of financial literacy, including installment purchasing, budgeting, savings and investing, banking, understanding simple contracts, State and federal income taxes, personal insurance policies and the comparison of prices (now, the instruction must include installment purchasing, budgeting and the comparison of prices).
- **SB 2898** (PA 94-792) add to statutory provisions that require a public or non-public school to permit the self-administration of medication by a pupil with asthma. The bill adds the requirement that the school permit a pupil to use an epinephrine auto-injector for immediate self-administration by a person at risk of anaphylaxis. Effective immediately.

Descriptions of other bills before the governor are contained in IASB's *Digest of Bills Passed, 2006*, compiled by the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance. It was recently published and sent to school districts, and it can also be found on the Association's Web site at <http://www.iasb.com/files/billspassed06.htm>.

State aid advanced

Rumors and concerns in school management circles over the timing of state aid payments proved groundless in late June as the state advanced the final two payments of the fiscal year to schools early.

"Advancing the final two payments is critical for school districts as they try to keep their budgets balanced," said a statement from the governor's office.

The announcement ended ongoing financial concern as most school district superintendents and business managers attempted to wrap up the 2006 fiscal year June 30.

MANNIX from page 1

IASB Job Fair for teachers, administrators and education majors.

Prior to joining IASB, Mannix worked nine years as director at Evergreen Park, IL Community High School, beginning in 1993 as director of building and grounds and later as the district's director of operations.

He held a bachelor's degree in business administration from St. Xavier College and also had been an instructor at Chicago City College. He also authored numerous manuals and papers.

"Much of John's career was devoted to improving the education of Illinois' school children by fostering

excellence in school governance," said Dr. Michael D. Johnson, executive director of IASB. "His intelligence, creativity and tenacity will be sorely missed."

Mannix was married and the father of three children and two stepchildren. Services were held Friday, Aug. 4, at Most Holy Redeemer Church. Donnellan Funeral Home handled arrangements.

The family suggests that memorials be made to Ronald McDonald House Charities-CNI, Attn: John Mannix Memorial Fund, 1900 Spring Road, Suite 310, Oak Brook, IL, 60523.

Online Learning Center closes for addition of new software features

The *Online Learning Center* is undergoing a software platform conversion, which means that IASB's five online courses will be unavailable for awhile.

As of July 1, the link to the OLC became inoperative. It is anticipated that the center will not re-open for some time. When it returns, the Center will look and operate differently. For the local school board learner, the site will offer courses that will include the following features:

- Immediate course registration and log on capability
- 24/7 tech support for forgotten user names and passwords — pre-, post- and during testing
- Video and audio streaming course enhancement
- Web link resources
- Chat rooms

How it will work

When you are ready to register, you should go to the IASB home page, and click on the *Online Learning Center* link. You will be instantly transferred to the new centralized OLC site.

You will be asked to click on your state, located on a U.S. map. This will enable a list of courses available to Illinois board members to appear. As you slide the mouse over each course title, a brief course description will

appear. When you are ready to select one of the courses, click on that course name, which will transfer you to the course registration page.

When it returns, the Center will look and operate differently. For the local school board learner, the site will have improved features.

On this page, you will be asked to enter personal information, including form of payment. Online registration will accept credit cards or purchase orders. As soon as the payment is accepted, you will be enrolled and may begin the course.

IASB's *Online Learning Center* is part of a national consortium of state school boards associations and the National School Boards Association. Currently, five courses are available:

- *School District Labor Relations: What Illinois Law Requires*
- *Roberts Rules of Order for School Board Members*
- *Lighthouse Learning: the Board's Role in Increasing Student Achievement*
- *Constructive Superintendent Evaluation*
- *Media Relations*

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- October 2 – Yom Kippur**
October 2 – Shawnee Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Marion CUSD 2, 6:30-9 p.m.
- October 3 – Egyptian Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Ashley CCSD 15, 6:30-9 p.m.
- October 4 – Kishwaukee Division Dinner Meeting**, 6 p.m.
- October 5 – Abe Lincoln Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Edinburg CUSD 4, 5:30 p.m.
- October 9 – Columbus Day**
October 15-17 – Illinois Principals Association Annual Convention, Springfield
- October 17 – Blackhawk Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Erie CUSD 1, 6 p.m. – Dinner
- October 18-19 – ISBE Board Meeting**, Lockport Township High School
- October 18 – Corn Belt Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Olympia CUSD 16, Stanford, 6 p.m. – Dinner
- October 24 – Western Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Avon CUSD 176, 6 p.m. – Dinner
- October 24 – Two Rivers Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Franklin CUSD 1, 5:30 p.m.
- October 25 – Central IL Valley Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Dunlap CUSD 323, 6 p.m. – Dinner
- October 26 – Kaskaskia Division Fall Meeting**, Hillsboro CUSD 3, 5:30 Registration
- October 30 – Lake County Division Dinner Meeting**, North Chicago High School, 6:30 p.m.



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