

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

July 2008 / Issue No. 675



Governor Rod Blagojevich, and House Speaker Michael Madigan have differed over state budgeting essentials.

Governor at odds over budget with Speaker Madigan, others

Although the legislature approved a fiscal year 2009 budget on May 31 and adjourned until November, Governor Rod Blagojevich has since called together the legislative leaders to resume budget negotiations. He charged that the legislature's actions were unconstitutional because lawmakers failed to meet the state constitutional requirement that the legislature pass a balanced budget.

Under terms of the education budget approved by lawmakers for Fiscal Year 2009, elementary and secondary education would get an increase of approximately \$515 million from FY '08 budget levels. That's an increase of more than 7 percent. This includes \$148 million in school construction funds for the 24 school districts that have been waiting for over five years for their previously approved school

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Census data on school finance ranks Illinois as second-worst

According to the latest study of revenues and expenditures for public elementary and secondary education, Illinois ranks second among all states in reliance on local revenue. Nevada is the only state in the nation, excluding the District of Columbia (DC), with a greater reliance on local funding; Illinois ranks third if DC is included.

The National Center for Education Statistics reported in April that approximately \$520.6 billion was collected in revenues for public elementary and secondary education in the 50 states and the District of Columbia in fiscal year 2006 (FY 06). The largest percentage of revenues came from state governments at \$242.1 billion, or 46.5 percent of all revenues. Local revenue contributed \$230.9 billion, or 44.4 percent of all revenues. The federal government's contribution was \$47.6 billion, or 9.1 percent of all revenues.

In Illinois, the figures are dramatically different. Approximately \$22.3 billion was collected in revenues, but the greatest burden was

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Koster appointed to Illinois State Board of Education seat

The governor recently appointed Lanita J. Koster to fill a vacancy on the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). Koster brings more than 35 years of Illinois educational experience to ISBE, most recently serving as the educational issues director for the Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT).



Lanita J. Koster

Koster replaces Edward J. Gepfert, Jr. a former teacher from Belleville, who stepped down from the State Board to serve as president of the Illinois Federation of Teachers, beginning on July 1. Koster's term expires in January 2011.

Koster began her career as a school social worker in **East Aurora School District 131**, where she worked for nearly 23 years. She has over 16 years of educational labor experience with both the IFT and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), having served as vice-president and legislative director for the IFT, as well as president and vice-president for the East Aurora Council, AFT Local 604, and statewide coordinator for educational issues and the AFT's Educational Research and Dissemination Program.

Schools can soon apply to be SES providers under NCLB

The next application periods for school districts to become approved Supplemental Educational Services (SES) providers under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) are: October 1, 2008 – October 31, 2008, and February 1, 2009 – February 28, 2009

See http://www.isbe.net/ses/html/application_process.htm for further details.

Public schools as good as private ones on student achievement: Study

Students in public schools learn as much or more mathematics between kindergarten and fifth grade as similar students learn in private schools, according to a new University of Illinois study of multi-year, longitudinal data on nearly 10,000 students.

The results of the study appeared in the May issue of a major education journal, *Phi Delta Kappan*.

"These data provide strong, longitudinal evidence that public schools are at least as effective as private schools in boosting student achievement," according to the authors, education professor Christopher Lubienski, doctoral student Corinna Crane and education professor Sarah Theule Lubienski.

The new report is the first published study to show that public schools are at least as effective as private schools at promoting student learning over time, the authors say.

Combined with other, yet-unpublished studies of the same data, which produced similar findings, "we think this effectively ends the debate about whether private schools are more effective than publics," said Christopher Lubienski, whose research has dealt with all aspects of alternative education.

This is important, he said, because many current reforms, such as No Child Left Behind, charter schools and vouchers for private schools, are at least partially based on that assumption.

The debate essentially began three years ago with the publication in *Phi Delta Kappan* of a previous study by the Lubienskis, which challenged the then-common wisdom – supported by well-regarded but dated research – that private schools were superior to public schools.

In that 2005 study, the Lubienskis found that public school students tested higher in math than their private school peers from similar social



Education professors Christopher and Sarah Lubienski led the U. of I. study.

and economic backgrounds. In another, more-extensive study in early 2006, they built on those findings, and also raised similar questions about charter schools. Both studies were based on fourth- and eighth-grade test data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).


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Newsbulletin

Illinois Association of School Boards

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James Russell, Director of Communications
Gary Adkins, Editor
2921 Baker Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62703-5929
(217) 528-9688
One Imperial Place
1 East 22nd Street, Suite 20
Lombard, Illinois 60148-6120
(630) 629-3776
www.iasb.com


ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Districts sensitive to parent concerns on school-day schedule

The District 150 Board of Education in Peoria on May 5 approved a new schedule for next year that calls for primary school students to spend 45 fewer minutes at school, while shifting the day to a 9:15 a.m. start, or one half hour later. The decision would impact 12 of the 16 elementary schools in District 150 and nearly 6,500 of the district's 14,000 students.

The schedule revision centers on the 45-minute planning time each teacher receives under the current contract, which is prep time scattered throughout the primary school day. School leaders say prep time would be shifted to mornings, before students arrive, thus eliminating up to 20 part-time prep teachers and boosting teacher planning time.

Although the schedule revision was made in response to a tight budget — and would save an estimated \$645,000 to \$810,000 — school leaders have listed a number of other potential improvements, including classroom instruction enhancements obtained

through elimination of interrupted teaching. It would reportedly allow for greater classroom flexibility, as well, mostly for providing teachers with common planning time, they added.

But some parents said they might remove their children from the Peoria schools next year if the change stands, and others suggested the district is fostering an educational setting hostile to new parents or newcomers to Peoria.

One teacher said she and some of her colleagues believe the shortened day may upset the school's balance in regard to recent educational gains.

Superintendent Ken Hinton said he would be meeting with several parents' groups about the shortened school day. "I am going to listen to what people have to say about that. If there is a way we can get where we need to go and keep the time and have the professional development time, I am open, I am more than open," he said.

Hinton said he definitely will come back to the board and share the information and input. He pledged to do what is in the best interests of children and families.

A group called District 150 Watch has offered a formal proposal that lays out a number of recommendations. Several of the group's suggestions would create additional prep time for

teachers.

The resulting expansion of "common prep time" would amount to more than 115 hours of additional planning time for teachers in impacted schools next year. That is roughly 12 fewer hours than District 150's plan calls for under the district's adopted change.

Peoria is not the only place to witness parental protests over changes in the school-day schedule. **Evanston-Skokie CCSD 65** on May 23 proposed to expand the number of early release days to carve out more time for professional development. Some parents protested there as well, however, saying that added prep time should not come at the cost of fewer full days of instruction for students. Some also charged the proposal would create a more chaotic schedule for parents.

Their dissatisfaction led to a letter-writing campaign spearheaded by ParentsWork, a small, new Illinois parents' organization. Together with other concerned parents and with the support of the local PTA Council, the group attended committee meetings, testified before the school board, wrote letters to the editor, and a petition drive that garnered 300 signatures.

And, as in Peoria, the Evanston district listened to its community. Evanston CCSD 65 school leaders have since responded by halting the expansion of early dismissal days in next year's calendar.

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The conclusions were supported later in 2006 with similar findings from U.S. Department of Education studies comparing public schools with private schools, and with charters. The federal studies looked mainly at NAEP test data on both math and reading.

Critics of the previous studies, however, cited the lack of longitudinal data showing the possible effect over time of different kinds of schooling.

The new study was designed, in part, to address that issue, the authors say in their PDK article.

The article is available online at a fee, or at no cost to Kappan subscribers and Phi Delta Kappa members who log in to access live links to articles. To learn more visit: http://www.pdkintl.org/kappan/k_v89/k0805toc.htm.



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construction grants.

A key piece of legislation is HB 5701 (Hannig, D-Litchfield). Under the state budget as adopted it would increase the school funding formula's foundation level by \$225 per pupil, and fully fund the mandated categorical grant programs. It would fund transition aid with \$31 million, ensuring that no school district would receive less state money in FY '09 than in FY '08. Early childhood education would increase by \$32.4 million under the bill, but the ADA Block Grant was held to the FY '08 funding level. Other budget line items scheduled to receive increases are:

- Gifted Education, \$2 million; Arts & Foreign Language, \$4 million
- Free Breakfast/Lunch, \$5.3 million; Teachers & Admin. Mentoring, \$2 million
- Grow Your Own Teachers, \$500,000; Bi-Lingual Assessments, \$12.6 million
- Response to Intervention, \$2 million; Educator Misconduct Investigations, \$375,000

Unlike last spring, a budget implementation bill was adopted by the legislature, SB 773 (Schoenberg), to implement the appropriations contained in HB 5701. It seeks to change the language in the School Code to increase the per pupil foundation level by \$225, bringing the total amount to \$5,959 per pupil. It also would continue the transitional aid provision and continue the poverty grant "hold harmless" provision. The budget bills will be sent to the governor for consideration.

The governor has claimed, however, that total expenditures are greater than revenues in the budget sent to him by lawmakers. A series of meetings with three of the top legislative leaders and the governor was launched during the second week of June in order to begin to iron out this fundamental stumbling block. But House Speaker Michael Madigan was noticeably absent from those meetings.

That same week, Madigan sent

out a 14-page memo to legislative candidates spelling out ways to impeach Gov. Rod Blagojevich.

The Illinois Constitution does not mention what triggers impeachment. It gives the Illinois House powers to investigate and move to impeach executive and judicial branch officials. It is then up to the state Senate to conduct a trial. A two-thirds vote of the 59 state senators is required to remove an official from office.

It remains to be seen whether all of the legislative leaders will meet with the governor, or if the governor will veto the budget bills, or if he will call a special session to bring the legislature back to Springfield to deal with the budget concerns he has identified.

"This could send lawmakers back to the drawing board," said IASB's Ben Schwarm, Associate Executive Director of IASB. "Like last year, the legislature may have to approve a temporary

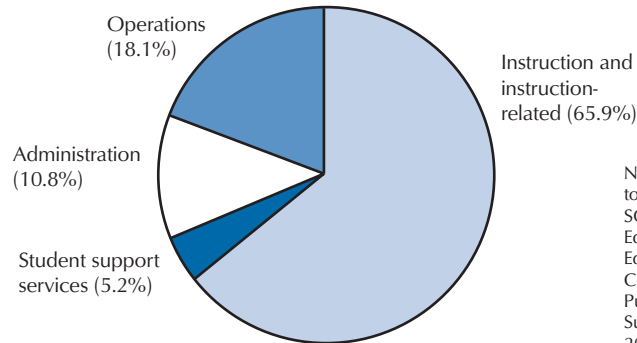
budget that will allow the State to continue operating while budget negotiations proceed," Schwarm said.

Gov. Blagojevich and some legislative leaders accuse Madigan of blocking an agreement on a capital construction program and fault him for not personally attending meetings with all the leaders on the capital program and the state budget.

IASB offers list of bills passed

The 2008 Digest of Bills Passed is available on the IASB website at: <http://www.iasb.com/govrel/digest08.cfm>. This Alliance publication, written by the IASB governmental relations department, contains all of the education-related bills that were approved by the legislature this spring and are pending before the governor. The publication will also be printed and mailed to every school district by the Alliance partners.

Expenditures for public schools nationwide, by function



NOTE: Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Common Core of Data (CCD), "National Public Education Financial Survey (NPEFS)," fiscal year 2006, Version 1a.

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on local sources, which contributed \$13.9 billion, or 62.0 percent, of all revenues. State revenue amounted to \$6.6 billion, or 29.6 percent, while the federal contribution was \$1.9 billion, or 8.4 percent of all revenue available for Illinois public elementary and secondary schools.

Among all states, only Nevada (at 66.9 percent) puts a greater burden on local revenue than Illinois to fund public education. Among the other select findings in the report on basic revenue and expenditure data:

- Illinois expenditure percentages by

category closely mirrored the rest of the country: state expenditures totaled \$19.2 billion, with the greatest share, \$11.3 billion (59 percent), spent on instruction for 2.1 million students.

- Per pupil expenditures for instruction at \$5,365 in Illinois ranked the state 24th. Support services expenditures for Illinois public elementary and secondary education were \$3,450, ranking the state 16th nationwide.

To read the entire report online, go to: <http://nces.ed.gov/pubs2008/2008328.pdf>

Experts challenge high school grading practices

When a group of 400 educators can calculate a student's grade using three different methods and come up with anything from an "A" to failure, it might be time to question how grading policies affect student learning and outcomes.



Debra Pickering

The grade calculation was part of a learning activity presented by Douglas Reeves, education author and founder of The Leadership and Learning Center, at the third annual High School Challenge Conference in Bloomington. After dividing the room in to thirds, Reeves asked everyone to calculate a student's semester grade using seven letter grades from 10 assignments and tests, but with three missing assignments.



Douglas Reeves

The first group, using the standard percentage method of an "A" that equals 100, a "B" as 90, etc., had grades that ranged from an "A" to an

"F." The second group used a point method, with an "A" that equaled four points, "B" as three points, etc. Their grades ranged from an "A" to a "D." The third group was allowed to choose their own grading system, but had to assign a letter grade. Their grades were "A," "B" or "C."

What happens, Reeves said, is that even with a policy in place, students can receive different grades from different teachers for essentially the same work. And policies that assign a "zero" for a missing assignment doom students to fail. When a "zero" comes at the beginning of the semester, some students simply give up, because they know enough math to know they can never extricate themselves from the "hole."

A better system, according to Reeves and fellow keynote speaker and education consultant Debra Pickering, would give students more immediate feedback and have assignments that are tied to specific learning goals. Missing assignments would still have consequences, but in terms of additional work assignments rather than a "zero."

Approximately 400 teachers, administrators and other education officials attended the two-day event in Bloomington. The conference also featured a welcome from Chris Koch,

state superintendent, and panel sessions on math instruction, literacy and ACT strategies, English Language Learners and Response to Intervention.

"Students learn in different timeframes," Pickering said in the opening keynote, but there are consequences if what is being taught isn't learned within the teacher's timeframe. In addition, she questioned whether teachers cling to some school projects and assignments because they have "always been done," not because it's a wise investment of instructional time.

She said all teachers should ask themselves two questions: "What's the learning goal?" and "Is it worth the time?"

In the second day's keynote, Reeves encouraged participants to focus their efforts on student achievement by setting a realistic number of goals and allowing them to take hold rather than starting so many new initiatives each school year. A show of hands revealed that many districts have started more than 20 new initiatives just in the past two years while terminating very few.

"Multiplicity of goals does not lead to higher achievement," Reeves said.

Study to show value of superintendent as achievement leader

In a question-and-answer session during the 2008 Illinois High School Challenge Conference, keynote speaker Debra Pickering said a study by researchers Robert Marzano and Timothy Waters that will be released later this year shows that superintendents can have a significant, positive influence on student achievement.

Marzano referenced the new study in "Getting Serious about School

Reform: Three Critical Commitments," where he said, "district and school leaders influence student achievement when they implement policies that directly affect what happens in classrooms."

The three commitments are:

- Developing a system of individual student feedback at the district, school and classroom levels;
- Ensuring effective teaching in every classroom; and

- Building background knowledge for all students, especially those with educationally challenging backgrounds.

The article is available at: <http://www.marzanoandassociates.com/pdf/gettingSerious.pdf>.

The study, which is in production through the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, is *From the boardroom to the classroom: District leadership that works*.

Resolutions would address key concerns, set course

Proposed IASB resolutions aimed at hot topics of day

The Delegate Assembly is one of the most important functions held at IASB's Joint Annual Conference each November. It gives member districts ownership in the association and the opportunity to establish the direction of the association.

Below are the proposed course-setting resolutions for IASB that school boards have submitted for consideration at this year's Delegate Assembly. It is possible that some proposals could be withdrawn before the resolutions committee meets in August; that might happen, for example, if the legislature has already adopted a law meeting the resolution's objectives (as appears to have already happened in a few cases). The committee will meet to make recommendations.

The list of proposed resolutions, including sponsoring district (and IASB division), currently includes:

- *Bilingual Education Options*, Lake Division, **Diamond Lake SD 76**, calls for legislation that would allow other methods to teach bilingual students besides Transitional Bilingual Education.
- *Electronic Option for IASB Surveys*, DuPage Division, **School District 45, Dupage**, calls for an electronic option to be available when completing surveys for IASB.
- *Board Member – Travel Reimbursement*, Wabash Valley Division, **Jasper County CUSD 1**, calls for law to allow elected board members reimbursement for traveling to certain school-related functions.
- *Abatements for Home Builders*, Corn Belt Division, **Iroquois West CUSD 10**, calls for legislation that would allow local boards to develop criteria for awarding property tax abatements to homebuilders.
- *Utility Tax Abatement for Schools*, Kishwaukee Division, **Indian Creek CUSD 425**, calls for legislation that would abate all state and local taxes on gas and electric usage.
- *School Year – Add Days*, Starved Rock Division, **Serena CUSD 2**, calls for a change in law to allow for a longer school year.
- *Property Tax Cap – GSA Calculation*, Kishwaukee Division, **Consolidated SD 158, Huntley**, calls for legislation that would fix the General State Aid (GSA) calculation for districts under the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) adopting a property tax rate increase for the operating fund.
- *Strike Prohibition*, Kishwaukee Division, **Consolidated SD 158, Huntley**, recommends amending IASB Position Statement 5.12 to forbid public school employees from striking.
- *Background Checks for Board Members*, DuPage Division, **Naperville CUSD 203**, calls for law to prohibit citizens from running for the school board if they've been convicted of certain crimes and to require a criminal background check for future board candidates.
- *Polling Places in Schools*, North Cook Division, **Elk Grove CCSD 59**, calls for amending IASB Position Statement 7.08 regarding using school buildings as polling places.
- *Standardized Achievement Tests*, DuPage Division, **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**, calls for a new IASB Belief Statement regarding standardized achievement tests.
- *Standardized Test Procedures*, DuPage Division, **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**, calls for amending an IASB Position Statement on the standardized test for English Language Learners (ELL).
- *Student Assessment*, DuPage Division, **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**, is the third resolution in a package of four sponsored by District 200 regarding English language learners. It calls for amending a current IASB Position Statement to address the standardized test for English Language Learners.
- *No Child Left Behind*, DuPage Division, **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**, the fourth resolution sponsored by the submitting district regarding English Language Learners. It calls for amending a current IASB Position Statement to address the standardized test for ELL.
- *School Board Member Training*, DuPage Division, **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**, calls for the adoption of a new IASB Belief Statement regarding mandatory school board member training.
- *School Finance Reform*, DuPage Division, **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**, specifically addresses the school board member training requirement as part of a school funding reform bill.
- *Consolidation into Unit Districts*, Lake Division, **Barrington CUSD 220**, calls for IASB to support legislation to promote the consolidation of all school districts into unit districts.
- *Belief Statement Procedures*, North Cook Division, **Schaumburg CCSD 54**, would require that IASB "Belief Statements" receive a recommendation from Resolutions Committee and then be approved by the IASB Delegate Assembly.
- *High School Exams*, Central Illinois Valley Division, **East Peoria CHSD 309**, allows for the inclusion of parts of a state-mandated exam as part of graduation requirements – as determined by the local district.
- *School Calendar Uniformity*, Central Illinois Valley Division, **East Peoria CHSD 309**, calls for support of a uniform calendar that would begin after Sep. 1 and eliminate the traditional spring break.
- *IEP Student Records*, South Cook Division, **Posen-Robbins ESD 143.5**, calls for encouraging the ISBE to define and extend the time schools have regarding IEP placement.
- *Non-Resident Student Tuition*, Southwestern Division, **Freeburg CCSD 70**, calls for the reaffirmation of last year's Position Statement 2.25, regarding charging tuition for non-resident students.

State standards need work in English, science, math

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) in May reviewed the results of an outside group's analysis of the state's high school standards. The group providing the review was a college and workforce readiness partnership called Achieve, Inc., which is now working in concert with the governor's office and the Gates Foundation.

Achieve, Inc. is a bipartisan, non-profit organization created by the nation's governors and corporate leaders to help states raise their academic standards, improve their assessments and strengthen accountability to prepare all young people for post-secondary education, work and citizenship.

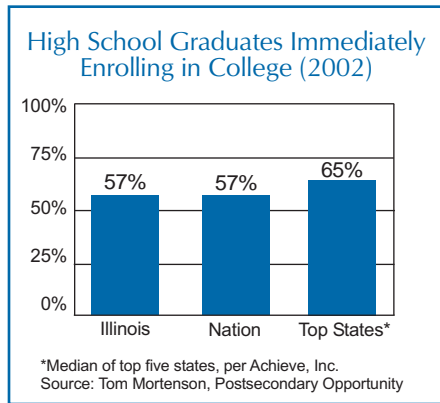
"An important part of Achieve's mission is to provide state policymakers with an independent, expert review of the quality of their standards and assessments," according to State Superintendent of Education Chris Koch.

The Illinois Learning Standards (ILS) were created by Illinois educators with input from the broader, private sector community. Illinois adopted the ILS in 1997, and this is the first time ISBE has undertaken a careful review and analysis of these standards benchmarked against exemplar standards in English language arts, mathematics and science.

The Achieve report provided responses to the following questions:

- How do Illinois Learning Performance Descriptors compare with the rigor of standards set by Achieve's exemplars in English language arts, science and mathematics?
- How well do the Illinois Learning Performance Descriptors in the three content areas measure up against the criteria of coherence, progression, focus, specificity, clarity and measurability?

While the Illinois descriptors were found to have some real strengths, Achieve found significant gaps in state expectations when compared to "exemplar standards," especially in English language arts and science. In



these areas, the descriptors were found to lack the clarity and specificity necessary to convey the level of performance expected of students. And to varying degrees, the progression of expectations from early high school to late high school is not clearly developed, according to Achieve, Inc.

Koch said he is all for making changes:

Forms help IASB keep count of 'Master Board' work aimed at member excellence

The Illinois Association of School Boards recognizes and honors board members for the time and effort they devote to self-improvement and leadership activities. "Master Board Member" activities are a means to achieving the Association's mission of excellence in local school governance.

IASB mailed out a form on June 4 for board members to use so they can be recognized for their efforts in Master Board Member activities. Directions on the form include a summary of IASB programs and activities that qualify for credits toward Master Board Member status. Points are cumulative from year to year and assigned to professional development, division activities, board development, legislative leadership, and IASB and NSBA leadership. Points range from 5 to 30. Credits are awarded through June 30; 60 to 129 points earn Level I status; 130-199 earn Level II status; and 200-plus points earn Master Board Mem-

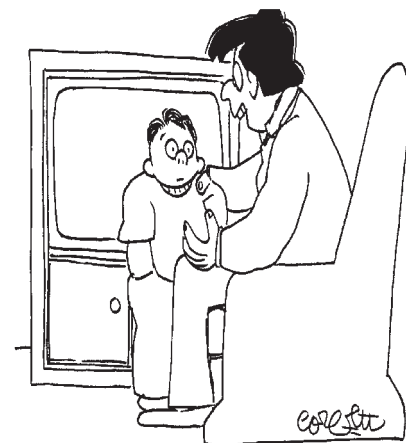
"It is appropriate that we review and revise our standards so that we best prepare every student for success. The review of the high school standards is the first step in a process which will include the review and alignment of our learning standards, K-12 and finally, alignment to post-secondary expectations and careers," he said.

The state board was expected to have a full discussion on the Achieve, Inc. study at its next meeting, "to discuss next steps to improve state standards, possibly moving toward joining the American Diploma Project 33 state network and convening a state team to participate in an Achieve Alignment Institute."

The full report from Achieve, Inc., and all of the materials, are available online at <http://www.isbe.net/reports.htm>.

ber distinction.

Board members are urged to make a copy for their own records prior to returning the completed document to IASB. Forms must be returned no later than July 31. Awards will be presented at the IASB fall division meetings or mailed if the award winner is not in attendance.



"Son, if you can become the class clown, you may someday get your own sitcom!"

Federal judge widens ban on 'silence' to all schools in state

A federal judge on May 29 widened the ban against requiring a "moment of silence" in schools from a few districts around the state to all schools statewide.

Judge Robert W. Gettleman stated at a court hearing he will issue a written order directing schools to stop enforcing a state law requiring a moment of silence at public schools, said an attorney for Dawn and Rob Sherman, the plaintiffs.

The Illinois State Board of Education said the board sent an e-mail to schools on May 29, telling them "in essence, they should immediately cease enforcing the law," according to Andrea Preston, an ISBE spokeswoman.

A student at Buffalo Grove High School had sued **Northwest Suburban School District 214**, alleging the "moment of silence" law was unconstitutional. Judge Gettleman agreed.

The student had argued that the law's wording made prayer more than just an option; it constituted an explicit suggestion from authorities that students pray, thus violating the freedom of religion.

The Alliance Defense Fund had filed a friend-of-the-court brief arguing the measure was strictly voluntary and constitutional. But the court apparently was not swayed by such arguments.

The Illinois attorney general's office, which has been defending the constitutionality of the law, said the office will review its options "on how to best proceed," according to Robyn Ziegler, a spokeswoman for the office.

Judge Gettleman had earlier announced the lawsuit would be applied to all schools, and the judge had debated whether to extend the preliminary injunction prohibiting enforcement to all schools as well. He gave schools in the state several weeks to weigh in before he ruled on May 29, but no school district came forward to support the law.



Northbrook Superintendent David Kroeze weighed in on 'Moment of Silence' mandate.

The lone district that chimed in on the case at all was **Northbrook Elementary District 27**, whose superintendent, David Kroeze, wrote, "We oppose the Silent Reflection and Student Prayer Act because it imposes an unnecessary and unworkable state mandate which serves no educational purpose."

While it is an issue that most likely will wind up back before the Illinois legislature, legislation in response to the lawsuit stalled in the spring session prior to adjournment.

The Illinois House voted in March to allow school districts to hold moments of silence but not require them to do so. The measure, sponsored by Rep. John Fritchey, D-Chicago, would also have deleted references to prayer contained in the law as it now stands. But the bill stalled in the Illinois Senate in mid-May when Sen. Kim Lightford, D-Chicago, tried to restore the mandatory language.

"The Alliance is closely watching this emerging issue," said Ben Schwarm, Associate Executive Director of IASB. "Our legal counsel is monitoring any future court decisions and our lobbyists will be involved in shaping any new legislation that might be introduced to address the matter," Schwarm said.

Total of seven strikes called in four districts in 2007-08 school year

At least 20 intent-to-strike notices against public schools were filed this school year, but only seven strikes were called in four school districts. Most of the threatened work stoppages ended without a strike in amicable contract settlements.

The first two strikes of the 2007-08 school year were called Aug. 21 in **Harlem District 122**, Machesney Park, located in northern Illinois. One work action there involved 516 certified teachers in grades pre-K thru 12; the other involved secretarial staff, along with clerical, maintenance, custodial, business director, etc. Both strikes lasted just about a week, ending on Aug. 28.

Strikes also occurred during the school year in the following school districts. Listed are the school districts, IASB division, bargaining unit size, and dates of the work action and settlement):

- **Earlville CUSD 9**, Starved Rock Division: Bargaining Unit Size: 37 IEA/NEA Teachers: Strike: October 19, 2007; Settled October 23, 2007.
- **Cahokia CUSD 187**, Southwestern Division: Bargaining Unit Size: 0 IFT/AFT Secretarial and Clerical: Strike: September 17, 2007; Settled: September 28, 2007;
- **Cahokia CUSD 187**, Southwestern Division: Bargaining Unit Size: 300 IFT/AFT Teachers, Nurses, Librarians, and Para-professionals: Strike: September 17, 2007; Settled: September 28, 2007;
- **Cahokia CUSD 187**, Southwestern Division: Bargaining Unit: IFT/AFT Service Workers: Strike: September 17, 2007; Settled: September 28, 2007.
- **Hardin County CUSD 1**, Elizabethtown, Shawnee Division: Strike: March 7, 2008; Settled: March 20, 2008

Other school districts that had a notice of intent to strike filed against them with the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board include:

- **Nippersink District 2**, Richmond, Kishwaukee Division: Bargaining Unit:

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NEWS HEADLINES

Barrington (June 1, *The Daily Herald*) Barrington Area Unit District 220 is rolling out a new newsletter and redesigned Web site to try to improve communication with district residents. The newsletter will direct readers, as well, to an online video magazine now in the works. Board President Brian Battle said the aim is to give residents more information about what is happening in the district. "We don't want it to look like the only conversations we have are around referendums," explained Battle.

Carpentersville (May 29, *The Daily Herald*) Carpentersville CUSD 300 recently announced that at least 66 students have transferred out of Cambridge Lakes Charter School this school year, out of about 512 enrolled for the year. Parents say they have been frustrated with the actions of the charter school's administration, while praising teachers' dedication to the school and its students. Some have complained of poor communication from charter school leaders and say they have not been given much input in the school. Two members of the charter school board that govern the school, including chairman Jerry Conrad, resigned in May.

Charleston (May 28, *Charleston Times-Courier*) Two teachers will be Charleston High School's literacy and numeracy coaches next year. The school board on May 28 approved the appointments of a language teacher at CHS as the literacy coach and a CHS math teacher as the numeracy coach. The board voted in March to establish the two positions to act as specialists to work with the school's teachers to improve the curriculum in the two subject areas.

Chicago (May 23, *The Associated Press*) Chicago District 299 is considering providing boarding schools for homeless students. Chicago school leaders are asking for proposals to

run such schools. They admit the idea poses big challenges, not the least of which is the high cost and opposition from some homeless advocates, who say they fear students would be stigmatized or isolated, and worry about separating children from their families. Officials counter that participation would be voluntary. They say the idea is part of a larger plan to improve schools and offer options in neighborhoods across the city through charter, contract and performance schools that are free from many district controls.

Coal City (May 22, *Morris Daily Herald*) A new policy in Coal City District 1 will take aim at cyberbullying. "We're not going to tolerate that," Coal City Community Unit School District 1 Superintendent Kent Bugg said. During its regular meeting, the board approved a number of changes to the student handbook, which will take effect during the next school year. Though they've seen some instances of cyberbullying in the past, Bugg said such occurrences have increased to a higher level than officials have ever seen before. He said such bullying seems more prevalent at the middle-school, rather than the high-school, level.

Elgin (May 7, 2008, *Elgin Courier-News*) The board in School District U-46, Elgin has approved a crime reporting policy. The board voted to extend its criminal reporting and records policy to include the village of Bartlett, although there is a question about whether the village will agree with the policy. However, Bartlett Police Chief Dan Palmer said it could take awhile before it is approved, due to the policy's controversial history. The school district's policy, which has been in place for nearly two years, is aimed at ensuring cooperation and communication between police and school officials for the benefit and safety of the school district's students,

staff and community.

Gavin (June 6, *News-Sun*) Gavin Elementary District 37 is soliciting candidates to fill a vacancy on the school board after former board president Barbara Mende was convicted of bidding violations involving the district. The board interviewed candidates in a special board meeting on June 23, hoping to fill the vacancy by July 8. The bidding violation involved hiring a moving company to move furniture and school equipment from a Lake Zurich school back into Gavin Central School in January 2006 when classes were held in Lake Zurich. The bid violation is based on Mende being responsible for dividing a \$13,000 job into two \$6,500 projects to sidestep requirements from competitive bidding. Mende was removed from the board and faces up to five years in prison or probation.

Grayslake (May 20, *The Daily Herald*) Grayslake Elementary District 46 is joining eight other districts in a plan for letting voters decide whether to approve a Lake County sales tax increase to help pay for construction-related expenses. The board voted on May 19 in favor of a November countywide sales tax referendum on whether to hike the sales tax by 1 percentage point. The voting was 5-2 to approve the plan. Under a new state law, school boards representing at least 51 percent of the student population of a county are allowed to adopt resolutions to place the sales tax proposition on the ballot. Local county boards can put the tax boost to a vote on their own or at the request of school boards.

Maple Park (May 31, *The Beacon News*) Concerned about supporting a wellness program, the Kaneland CUSD 302 Board of Education has banned all food treats from elementary school birthday parties, a policy that will become effective next school year.

School Code, law survey books now available from IASB, with CD ROMs

The 2008 editions of the *Illinois School Code and Related Acts*, compiled by LexisNexis Law Publishing Company for IASB, and the *Illinois School Law Survey*, by Brian A. Braun, an attorney with Miller, Tracy, Braun, Funk & Miller, Ltd., are now available from IASB. Both come with helpful CD ROM versions.

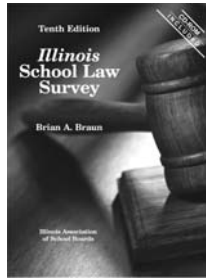
The *School Code* is being sold as the 2008 School Code Service, which will include the 2009 *School Code Supplement* to be published next year.

The *School Code* comes with a CD ROM version that carries the full text of the book. It is current for laws in force as of Jan. 1, 2008. Its CD ROM also includes annotations with case law and other references, and all State Board of Education rules, plus the text of court cases cited in the annotations. The CD is equipped with the Folio Views search engine for easy searching, and for saving and printing on any PC equipped with Microsoft Windows. It will not run on other operating systems.

Copies of the 2008-2009 Illinois School Code Service — which includes the 2008 Code and 2009 Supplement, both with book and CD ROM — are \$60 each (\$50 for IASB member districts), plus \$5 per order for shipping. The *School Code* can also be purchased in quantity at a reduced price, with full cartons priced at \$430 (\$360 for IASB member districts).

School attorneys say that keeping such a legal reference on hand makes good sense in light of the major impact new laws can have on school districts operating in the ever-changing world of school law. Fortunately it's easy to use this reference tool to quickly uncover what the law now says on many of the issues board members and administrators face.

Because of the myriad changes being enacted into statute each year, experts suggest replacing any law book that is more than a year old. Having outdated information, after all, is worse than having no information.



Also available is the Tenth Edition of the *Illinois School Law Survey*, a convenient guide to the key school law questions that educators and laymen most need to have answered. The Survey, published by IASB, presents answers to more than 1,300 questions in 27 chapters, along with complete legal citations to state and federal statutes, court decisions and agency regulations. It comes with its own CD ROM version that adds substantially to its usefulness.

The Law Survey's CD is an "All-in-One" legal reference, featuring quick links to the full text of nearly all statutory, regulatory and case law citations, plus the full text of the book. The CD can run with any standard Web browser and is ready for loading on your computer (PC or Mac).

It is available from IASB for \$35 a copy (\$25 for IASB member districts), plus \$5 per order for shipping. Here is how to order:

- Call 217/528-9688, ext. 1108
- Shop the IASB online bookstore at: <http://www.iasb.com/shop/>
- Fax your order to 217/528-2831
- Mail your order to IASB Publications, 2921 Baker Drive, Springfield, Illinois 62703-5929.

Buyers will be asked to provide the title of the item(s) they want and the quantity; their name, organization, mailing address, and daytime telephone. Orders can be made with check, credit card or purchase order.

Member prices are available to IASB member school districts (board members and employees), and to members of IASB Service Associates and Illinois Council of School Attorneys.

NEWS FROM IASB

Board of Directors to meet on August 22-23

The IASB Board of Directors' next quarterly meeting, Aug. 22-23 in St. Charles, is scheduled to include an evaluation of the executive director, board review and assessments of current year activity reports, and monitoring reports, and a look at reports from the president and the executive director.

The board's next meetings will take place at the Joint Annual Conference at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Chicago, on Nov. 20 and 23, respectively.

IASB will offer valuable 'new superintendents' events

New superintendents and those new to Illinois are invited to attend one of two luncheons in August at IASB. IASB's Lombard office will host one luncheon on Aug. 13; IASB's Springfield office will host the other on Aug. 14.

This is a unique opportunity for new superintendents to learn about IASB and its services, to meet helpful Association staff members, and to network with other new superintendents. Participants will get a free copy of one of IASB's most popular publications on effective meetings, the newly revised book *Coming to Order*, and a coupon good for an IASB division dinner meeting registration.

Invitations were sent in early July, and those interested in attending are asked to choose which date and location is most suitable. RSVP the Lombard office to Loretta Cotten at 630/629-3776, ext. 1237 (lcotten@iasb.com), or RSVP the Springfield office to Chelsea Reimann at 217/528-9688, ext. 1117 (creimann@iasb.com). Both luncheons will be from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., and registration is free.

Mandate waiver applications due at ISBE by Aug. 8

Applications for waivers from School Code mandates – such as modifications to school calendar mandates or administrative rules – to be decided this fall must be sent to the state by Aug. 8. Applications must be sent to the Illinois State Board of Education to be included in the Fall 2008 Waiver Report, which is to be submitted to the General Assembly by Oct. 1.

A school district may request a waiver or modification of the mandates of state laws or regulations when the district demonstrates it can meet the intent 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, that request is deemed granted. But even disapproved requests 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.

If school leaders are applying for 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. But approval must be granted before the modification can be implemented.

The process for applying for a modification of the School Code or a waiver or modification of state board rules is the same as the one 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 a recent law, Public Act 93-1036, schools need to submit an amended calendar to their Regional Office of Education and have it approved before any calendar modification can be implemented.

A new law enacted in August 2007 limits the term of physical education waivers. Public Act 95-223 took effect on Jan. 1. This Act provides that an approved physical education waiver (or modification) may remain in effect for a period not to exceed two school years and may be renewed no more than two times upon application by the eligible applicant.

Before passage of this law, physical education applications could be requested for a maximum of five years and for an unlimited amount of time. The intent of this law is that a school district or other applicant will be lim-

ited to a total of six years in which it may have an approved waiver for physical education.

School districts and other organizations eligible to apply for waivers should assume that any physical education applications submitted to ISBE from this time on are subject to the provisions of P.A. 95-223.

The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance played a central role in pushing for the passage of the state waiver law, which took effect in 1995. The waiver law requires an applicant with a governing board, such as a school district, to hold the public hearing on a day other than the day of a regular board meeting. 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.

Before beginning the waiver process ISBE suggests that each applicant should carefully review requirements outlined in the “Overview for Waiver Process” found online at <http://www.isbe.net/isbe-waivers/html/overview.htm>.

Application forms and instructions for waivers and modifications are provided by the state board and can be downloaded at <http://www.isbe.net/isbewaivers/html/application.htm>.

STRIKES *from page 8*

- IEA/NEA staff: Filed September 18, 2007; Settled: October 21, 2007
- **Rockford District 205**, Kishwaukee Division: Bargaining Unit: IEA-NEA staff: Notice: August 17, 2007; Settled: August 27, 2007
- **Mahomet-Seymour CUSD 3**, Illini Division: Bargaining Unit: IEA/NEA staff: Notice Filed: August 14, 2007; Settled: August 22, 2007
- **Jersey CUSD 100**, Jerseyville, Southwestern Division: Bargaining Unit: IEA/NEA staff: Filed: October 26, 2007
- **Township High School District 211**, Palatine, North Cook Division: Bargaining Unit: IFT/AFT staff: Notice: October 19, 2007
- **Carrollton District 1**, Two Rivers Division: Bargaining Unit: IFT/AFT staff: Notice: September 21, 2007
- **Belleville Area Special Services Cooperative**, Southwestern Division: Bargaining Unit: IFT staff: Notice: September 17, 2007
- **West Frankfort CUSD 168**, Egyptian Division: Bargaining Unit: IFT/AFT staff: Filed: September 13, 2007
- **Litchfield CUSD 12**, Kaskaskia Division: Bargaining Unit: IEA/NEA staff: Filed: September 12, 2007
- **Northwestern CUSD 2**, Kaskaskia Division: Bargaining Unit: IEA/NEA teachers: Filed: September 6, 2007
- **Belleville THSD 201**, Southwestern Division: Bargaining Unit: IFT/AFT teachers: Filed: August 10, 2007
- **Fulton County CUSD 3**, Western Division: Bargaining Unit: IFT/AFT teachers: Filed: August 9, 2007
- **Harmony Emge District 175**, Belleville, Southwestern Division: Bargaining Unit: IFT/AFT teachers: Filed: August 7, 2007
- **Belle Valley District 119**, Belleville, Southwestern Division: Bargaining Unit: IFT/AFT teachers: Filed: August 7, 2007

Envision a more inclusive future through new diversity workshops

IASB has a new Diversity and Inclusion Awareness workshop that it will roll out in late summer at three locations.

If you are committed to a diverse and inclusive school district in which each man, woman and child is valued, and everyone has an opportunity to reach “maximum potential,” this workshop is for you.

Through engaging, interactive exercises, this half-day workshop will increase your “diversity and inclusion” awareness — the first step in the diversity education process. Workshop objectives include:

- Creating a common understanding of “diversity and inclusion.”
- Discussing the behaviors required to create an inclusive environment in which every man, woman and child is included, valued and respected.
- Linking diversity issues with achieving district goals.
- Broadening the scope of diversity beyond typical race and gender issues to include education, religion, age, physical abilities, sexual orientation, class/income, language and other aspects of diversity.

- Revealing and assessing the impact of subtle biases on school district success.

The Diversity and Inclusion Awareness workshop will be held from 5:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. on Aug. 26 at Touch of Nature in Carbondale, Sep. 4 at IASB offices in Springfield, and Sep. 10 at IASB offices in Lombard.

Tuition is \$195 per person, which includes materials and meals. Advance registration is required. Registration must be received two days prior to each workshop.

Overnight lodging is not included with workshop tuition. If you need lodging information for the workshop you plan to attend, please call Judy Williams at 217/528-9688 or 630/629-3776 extension 1103.

Mail or fax your registration form with payment information to: Illinois Association of School Boards Registrar, 2921 Baker Drive, Springfield, IL 62703-5929, FAX 217/528-2831. Or register for a workshop online by visiting <http://www.iasb.com>. Cancellation with refund will be accepted up to two days prior to each meeting date (before 12 noon) by calling IASB at 217/528-9688 or 630/629-3776, extension 1103.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

August 13 — New Superintendents Luncheon, IASB Lombard, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m.

August 14 — New Superintendents Luncheon, IASB Springfield, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

August 22-23 — IASB Board of Director Retreat, Pheasant Run, St. Charles

August 23 — IASB Board of Directors' Meeting, Pheasant Run, St. Charles

August 26 — Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Workshop, SIU Touch of Nature, Carbondale, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

September 4 — Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Workshop, IASB Springfield, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

September 9 — Wabash Valley Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Lawrence County CUSD 20, Lawrenceville, 6 p.m.

September 10 — Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Workshop, IASB Lombard, 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

September 16 — Professional Advancement Seminar: Seeking the Superintendency, IASB Springfield, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

September 18 — Professional Advancement Seminar: Seeking the Superintendency, IASB Lombard, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.



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