

# Illinois SCHOOL BOARD *Newsbulletin*

August 2010 / Issue No. 700

## Agriculture education programs hit with budget cuts

**\$1 million reduction has ripple effect statewide**

When the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) agreed in June to cut \$300 million from its budget, it removed one line item that will affect thousands of students, teachers and volunteers in agriculture education programs.

The initial elimination of \$3,043,100 affected incentive funding grants (41 percent), teacher and program services (32 percent), curriculum resources and professional development (23 percent), and administration (4 percent). The governor restored all but \$1,095,500 of this on Aug. 2.

The budget cut was made because the state needed the money to access federal funding that supplements state

See **AG CUTS** on page 4



Agriculture education advocates say cuts will erode the ability of ag businesses to find enough interested future farmers with the training needed to lead the industry forward. (See sidebar on how big ag ed has become, on page 4.)

## Law change moves up dates for nominating petitions, certifications

New statutory changes in the state election date schedule have moved up due dates for nominating petitions and election certifications, and moved up by two weeks the date by which a public pol-

Also see *election workshops*, page 3

icy question must be acted upon.

Governor Pat Quinn signed the bill on July 6 to alter filing deadlines, and change important dates for upcoming

elections. SB 3012 (**Link, D-Vernon Hills**) makes numerous changes to the Election Code. Among the many changes are the deadlines for filing nomination, public question, and objec-

See **DEADLINES** on page 3

## On the inside

- National standards a step closer .....Page 2
- Support professionals conference set .....Page 9
- Construction grants revived .....Page 12

**IASB  
 resolutions  
 address fiscal woes**

Page 10

## Registration opens for RtI summit of secondary schools

Illinois ASPIRE has opened registration for the two-day Middle School/High School Response to Intervention (RtI) Summit. This workshop will be offered in three locations: Sep. 27 and 28 in Collinsville; Sep. 28 and 29 in East Peoria; and Sep. 29 and 30 in Naperville.

Registration is open to district and school teams of up to five people. It's recommended that teams be comprised of one or more administrators, teaching staff and related services staff. Registrants must be able to attend both days of the workshop. Registration is available via the following links: <http://www.illinoisaspire.org/central/trainings.php?continue=yes> OR <http://tworivers.pdaonline.org/WorkshopQuery.php?type=ASPIRE>

The registration deadline is Sep. 10. The cost of the workshop is \$20 per participant for both days.

Questions can be directed to Rhonda Mooberry at [rmooberry@peoriaroe48.net](mailto:rmooberry@peoriaroe48.net) (preferred) or 309/673-1040.

## Energy efficiency grant forms to be available by late summer

The Illinois legislature's FY 2010 capital bill provided \$50 million for School Energy Efficiency Grants. The grants are a dollar-for-dollar state matching grant program providing up to \$250,000 each for energy efficiency projects in schools. All school districts, charter schools, cooperative high school, vocational center, or public university laboratory schools are eligible.

Plans are for the grants to be distributed over the next three fiscal years, with \$9 million released this summer. For more information, contact ISBE's School Business Services Division at 217/785-9779.

# ISBE board members vote unanimously to support national learning standards

Illinois State Board of Education members on July 22 voted unanimously to support a new set of standards for what every public school student should know when they graduate high school, joining a push to create a single standard for reading and math instruction across the country.

The expectations for every grade level replaced Illinois' existing standards, which dated to 1997. ISBE said the standards could affect local classrooms as soon as this fall.

"It's about time," said Glenn "Max" McGee, president of the Illinois Math and Science Academy in Aurora, and former state superintendent. "It's going to require really relooking at the state's assessment system, and that can't happen soon enough," McGee told the *Chicago Tribune* recently.

One change already is clear: for the most part, the common standards don't assign textbooks or other books, deferring that task to local school boards and educators. But unlike Illinois' current standards, they detail

key texts that are appropriate for students at different grade levels.

The changeover in guidelines paves the way for a national standardized exam to measure how students compare across the states. Students likely would not begin taking the new test before 2014.

"We know they are fewer than our current standards. We know they are clearer and we believe, in some areas, that they are higher than our current standards," said Susan Morrison, deputy superintendent of education at ISBE.

Illinois became just the 13th state to give final approval to the Common Core State Standards. States that adopted the standards earlier are: Hawaii, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, West Virginia and Wyoming.

For more information about the standards, and a list of the states that have since adopted them, visit the website at: <http://www.corestandards.org/>.

## State cuts ISAT writing test in grades 3, 5, 6, 8 for 2010-11 school year

In response to the state's budget crisis, the Illinois State Board of Education decided at its June meeting not to administer the ISAT writing assessment for grades 3, 5, 6 and 8 during the 2010-11 school year. The ISAT writing assessments are not part of the federal No Child Left Behind mandate, and Illinois receives no federal dollars to support these writing tests. The NCLB law only requires math and reading assessments.

A writing assessment will still be a component of the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) given to 11th-graders in Illinois. Many universities require the writing test for admission.


See **WRITING TESTS** on page 6

*Illinois*  
**SCHOOL BOARD**  
*Newsbulletin*

**Illinois Association  
of School Boards**

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**ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION  
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

# District secretary workshops set on 2011 board election

IASB is presenting a workshop at five selected dates and locations this fall for district employees who serve as the board secretary and/or superintendent's secretary and elected board secretary. The election workshop is intended to assist these board secretaries in their role as the local election official for the April 5, 2011 school board elections.

Under Illinois law, the "local election official" for school districts is the board secretary or another person(s) designated by the board to receive nominating papers. That would include:

- The elected board secretary,
- The superintendent's secretary who serves as the board secretary,
- Another district employee who serves as the board secretary, or
- A district employee who is the "designated representative" of the school board secretary for purposes of the election

Topics addressed will include:

- Election procedures: a countdown to the big day
- Procedures for conducting the organizational meeting
- Election of new officers

The workshop, which costs \$55 per person, and will be held from 10 a.m. to noon, with registration from 9:30 to 10 a.m., will be held at these dates and locations:

- **Friday, September 17**  
Illinois Association of School Boards, Springfield
- **Friday, September 24**  
Holiday Inn, Rock Falls
- **Friday, October 1**  
Mt. Vernon SD 80, Mt. Vernon
- **Thursday, October 7**  
Freedom Hall, Park Forest
- **Friday, October 8**  
Marquardt SD 15 Administration Center, Glendale Heights

The presenter at the Mt Vernon, Springfield, and Rock Falls locations will be Anna Lovern, director of policy services, IASB. She has presented regional workshops and educational panel sessions designed to meet the needs of school district secretaries for 14 years.

Presenting at the Park Forest and Glendale Heights locations is Alan M. Mullins, an attorney with Scariano, Himes and Petrarca. He has represented school districts for 28 years, and advised superintendents or their secretaries about the day-to-day election requirements for 25 years.

Interested participants may register on the IASB web site at <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/register.cfm?ID=620>. Additional election information is also available online at <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/districtsecretarywkshpbrochure.pdf>.

Note: attendance earns elected board members five credits in IASB's Master Board Member Program.

## DEADLINES *from page 1*

for petitions and for an election authority's various candidate and ballot certification duties. The bill is now Public Act 96-1008, effective July 6, 2010.

It will change the dates and timelines for this fall's General Election and timelines for next year's board election. It moves up due dates for circulation of nominating petitions (to Sep. 21, 2010), and filing (to Dec. 13, 2010), and candidate certifications (to Jan. 27, 2011), and moves up by two weeks the date by which a public policy question must be acted upon by elected boards to be put on the ballot.

The date for the board secretary to certify ballot questions to the election authority (county clerk) for the upcoming Nov. 2, 2010 General Election has *not* changed and remains Sep. 2, or "not less than 61 days before a regularly scheduled election" (10 ILCS 5/28-5).

The full text of the Act can be found at [http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/fulltext.asp?DocName=&SessionId=76&GA=96&DocTypeId=SB&](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/fulltext.asp?DocName=&SessionId=76&GA=96&DocTypeId=SB&ocNum=3012&GAID=10&LegID=50345&SpecSess=&Session)

[ocNum=3012&GAID=10&LegID=50345&SpecSess=&Session](http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/fulltext.asp?DocName=&SessionId=76&GA=96&DocTypeId=SB&ocNum=3012&GAID=10&LegID=50345&SpecSess=&Session).

The changes leave little time for school districts to plan for the next school board election, which is to be held on April 5, 2011. That is the date of the next board election because, under law, school board elections are held at the consolidated election on the first Tuesday in April of each odd-numbered year.

If that date had conflicted with Passover, however, by law the consolidated election would have been moved to the second Tuesday in April; but there is no such conflict in 2011.

When official dates become available from the state Board of Elections, the IASB website will post them at <https://www.iasb.com/elections/>.

As the deadlines for petitions approaches, IASB reminds members of its latest election tools. "Recruiting School Board Candidates" is a guide to help school board members to recruit prospective school board

candidates. This material, available upon request, is intended to support the ongoing process of identifying, recruiting and mentoring future board candidates, whether at the next election or in an appointment process.

Information in the packet includes:

- school board member job description
- why school board members serve
- characteristics of an effective school board member
- how and where to find qualified candidates
- talking with potential candidates
- school board election timetable
- additional resources

This extensive packet of information is available free of charge to member districts and can be ordered by calling Tammy Call at 217-528-9688, ext. 1108. In addition, your IASB field services director is available to present this information to your board and/or community upon request.

## AG CUTS *from page 1*

education dollars for certain programs, such as career and technical education, according to Matt Vanover, ISBE spokesman.

The federal government requires states to not reduce spending on those programs to be eligible for federal funds, he explained.

"We had to take money that was set aside for other purposes to meet the mandated federal (funding) effort," Vanover said.

The cuts will not mean the end of agriculture education. But local district funds that were already budgeted for the coming school year in many cases will be without key components.

"It will be a tightening of the belt, but hopefully nothing that would force the closure of the program," said instructor Wayne Griffith at Marion High School in **Marion CUSD 2** in southern Illinois. Griffith is one of more than 400 ag-ed teachers in Illinois schools.

Marion, which has 90 ag-ed students, received \$3,400 in state aid for the 2009-2010 school year. Such funds are used for a variety of purposes, such as small grants to vocational agriculture instructors to repair equipment in their classrooms, buy software for student education, or purchase a piece of technology that can be used for teaching. The funds also provided funding for professional development for teachers.

In central Illinois, Stanford-based **Olympia CUSD 16** has seen participation in its agricultural courses and FFA programs growing over the past couple of years even without state money. Now it will likely receive no state funding next year for ag-ed.

Among the agricultural programs available at Olympia High School are wind energy, agribusiness skills lessons and leadership training. More than 100 of the 600 students at Olympia are FFA members.

"The \$3,000 [Olympia received last year] was used for supplies for our agricultural education program," said Superintendent Brad Hutchison.

That amount doesn't sound like much, but every little bit helps with programs that rely heavily on scientific equipment, he said.

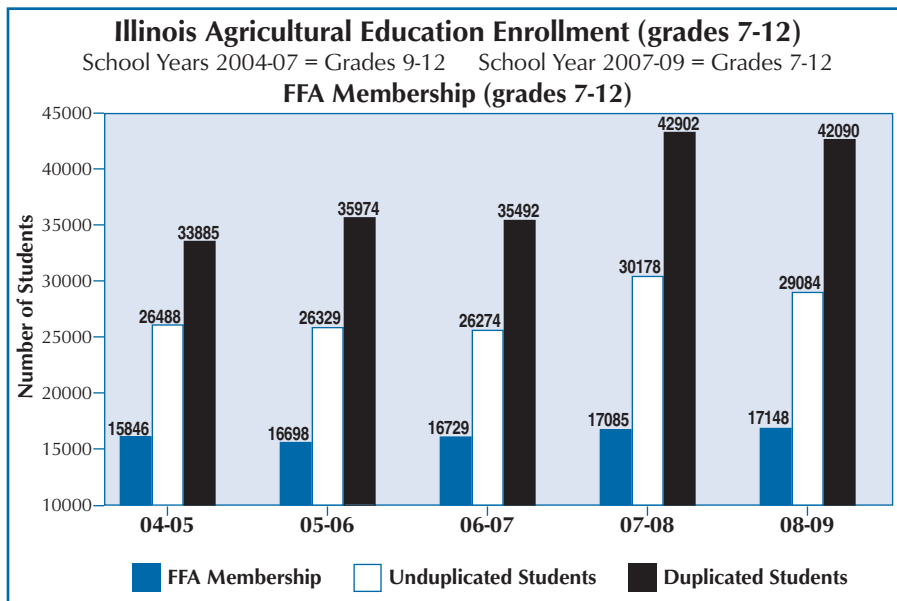
Loss of incentive funding grants alone will translate to a \$982,100 cut from 320 local agriculture programs affecting 398 teachers at the secondary level.

Last year the state allocated \$3.3 million for ag-ed programs, which have been continuously funded by the state since 1987. One of the programs it

supported was expenses for agricultural literacy volunteers in 95 Illinois counties. Last year, they worked in programs that reached 468,000 elementary students and 29,000 teachers with messages about agriculture and information about where food originates. Kits developed to teach kids about agricultural literacy topics would also disappear.

The loss of state funding will have

*See AG CUTS on page 5*



## Ag programs instruct over 468,000 elementary and 30,000 secondary students in 2,300 schools

Agriculture education programs in Illinois reach 468,000 elementary students through agricultural literacy volunteers at more than 2,000 elementary schools and over 30,000 secondary students at more than 300 schools, according to Illinois FFA statistics [See the website at: <http://www.aginthe classroom.org/060605/New/08-09accomplishments.pdf>, and at <http://www.agricultural education.org/images/editor/Quick%20Facts%2008-09%20Grades%207-12.pdf>.]

Enrollment has been growing of late, with secondary school totals surging from over 26,000 students in 2004-05 to more than 30,000 students today.

Few of the secondary school students enrolled in such programs live on a family farm (10 percent). Student enrollment is primarily male (65 percent), and minority students are not rare (9 percent).

Among agriculture education programs in Illinois secondary schools, the average number of students per class is 21, with 91 students per school on average. A majority (52 percent) of such programs have agriculture articulation agreements with colleges.

In fact, most high school graduates who have participated in such programs (62 percent) go on to college, with the rest directly entering the workforce.

# Quinn, ISBE cut FY 2011 education budget, spare state aid

Governor Quinn signed several bills into law on July 1 that put the state's Fiscal Year 2011 budget into effect. The governor spared the General State Aid foundation level funding, which will remain at the current level of \$6,119 per pupil. Mandated categorical grants, with the exception of student transportation, were also mostly spared.

The budget is largely written in red ink, and an even wider imbalance was created when the Senate did not call a bill for a vote on a borrowing plan to allow the state to make its annual pension fund payments. Although there was some expectation for the Senate to return before the end of June to address the pension borrowing bill, that failed to materialize, as Senate President John Cullerton continued to say there were not enough Senate votes to pass the bill.

The cost of the pension payment for FY 2011 is \$3.7 billion and currently there is no revenue source identified to cover that major payment.

"Even at this late date, school districts still do not know exactly what is in or out of the FY '11 education budget. We need to be told officially what the final numbers look like," said Ben Schwarm, IASB's associate executive director for advocacy and governmental relations.

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) met in the last week of June to discuss, among other things, the allocation of funding dollars for individual education budget line items. According to the appropriations bill approved by the legislature in May, funding for General State Aid in FY 2011 is intended to fund the current foundation level of \$6,119 per pupil, and funding for the mandated categorical grants is underfunded by \$327 million. For all of the other grant items, the legislature issued a lump sum to the ISBE for the board to allocate.

Through ISBE action, several line items were to be "zeroed out," appropriating nothing, including some items partially restored since, such as: Advanced Placement, After School Matters, Ag Education (see related story on Page 1), Arts and Foreign Language, National Board Certification and Teach for America. Summer Bridges, Reading Improvement Block Grant, Grow Your Own Teachers, ADA Block Grant, and the School Breakfast Incentive weren't restored.

The ISBE is requesting that the governor and the General Assembly appropriate additional funds to cover these budget line items. The updated ISBE budget can be found online at: [http://www.isbe.net/budget/FY11\\_budget.pdf](http://www.isbe.net/budget/FY11_budget.pdf).

In finalizing some of his budget priorities on July 1, Governor Quinn said he was making public education a priority, especially the General State Aid formula. The appropriation bill for the ISBE is intended to fund the foundation level at the current level of \$6,119 per pupil, and this line item was untouched by the governor.

"We appreciate that the governor made General State Aid and special education a priority, now we need to have the state make their school aid payments on time," said Schwarm.

The mandated categorical grants, announced by the legislature in May to be taking a \$327 million hit, only saw a reduction of \$146 million. This was the result of a cut in regular student transportation reimbursements, a cut totaling 42 percent of the general transportation line item. The governor, however, allocated additional dollars to early childhood education to level fund this line item the same as FY 2010.

It appears that most budget line items mentioned previously as "zeroed out," are not without funding under the governor's budget. The "hold harmless" provision, however, goes unfunded under the governor's final action.

School supporters are still trying to decipher the various budget forms, bills, and vetoes to determine exactly how the education budget shakes out.

## AG CUTS *from page 4*

a ripple effect as well. Last year, state funds were matched by \$10 million from local communities to support Supervised Agricultural Education projects, and the 20 staff members who support 398 agricultural education teachers around the state.

Harley Hepner, an agricultural education consultant to ISBE, criticized the reduction: "The result of this action will significantly affect agricultural education in a negative way across the state, from agricultural literacy efforts at the elementary levels, to classrooms at the secondary and postsecondary levels," Hepner said.

"The decision will significantly erode the ability of agricultural businesses to find an adequate supply of future employees with the skills and knowledge they need to successfully lead the industry in the future."

The funding loss did not go down without a fight. Providing testimony to the ISBE finance and audit committee in June was James Craft, executive director of the Illinois Association of Vocational Agriculture Teachers. "Agriculture teachers across Illinois are fully aware of the state's critical fiscal status," he said. But he said the teachers' organization believes

state funding has been a solid investment.

"It has a proven record of generating dollars, it incorporates ISBE goals and initiatives fully within the projects funded by the line item, it touches the lives of students of all ages and from all corners of Illinois and it serves an industry that employs 20 percent of Illinois' workforce. The partnership that has been developed between all levels of education, with the support of industry, and parents is too important to discard – that level of partnership is the envy of the nation and a model for the future."

# Better alignment needed for high schools, community colleges

## Argues many graduate unprepared for college

High schools should try to work with community colleges to better align their curricula and to reduce the number of students who need to enroll in remedial courses, according to a University of Illinois expert who studies community college education policy.



Debra Bragg

Debra Bragg, a professor of educational organization and leadership and the director of the Forum on the Future of Public Education at Illinois, says a major reason why college completion is not keeping pace with enrollment is that some students graduate from high school inadequately prepared for college-level work.

"It's a system-wide problem, as well as a fundamental lack of alignment between high schools and colleges, and the system's lack of expectations and support for students who aren't seen as high achievers as they progress through K-12," Bragg said.

Of students attending community colleges, 58 percent were enrolled in at least one remedial course, compared to slightly more than 30 percent of students attending non-selective four-year institutions, 2 percent attend-

ing selective four-year institutions, and less than 1 percent at highly selective institutions.

During the 2006-07 school year, about 6.2 million students attended community colleges, accounting for nearly half of all undergraduate students enrolled in higher education in the U.S.

When students spend a semester or more re-taking high school or sometimes even elementary school-level course work at a community college before ever enrolling in a college-level class, it not only slows whatever educational momentum they have toward earning an associate's degree or eventually transferring to a four-year institution, it also greatly reduces the chances of that student ever completing any college certificate or degree, a key goal of President Obama's ambitious American Graduation Initiative, Bragg said.

"It's a pervasive problem in that, by repeating these high school-level courses, it uses up a lot of students' financial aid," she said. "When students don't have the money to go to school, their choices are limited to finding entry-level jobs in a tight labor market. Once they do that, the likelihood that they will ever go back to school and earn a degree is greatly diminished."

Despite college enrollment being at an all-time high, the percentage of students earning college degrees has

remained relatively unchanged over the past 25 years. From 2004 to 2007, less than three in 10 community college students actually earned degrees, according to federal data. With other countries' college completion rates rising, the U.S. is holding steady in real numbers but declining relative to other countries in the proportion of students with college credentials.

In Illinois, Bragg noted positive developments associated with the state's College and Career Readiness Pilot Act, a law passed in 2007 aimed at reducing remediation in Illinois' community colleges. One of the positive developments to come out of the bill, Bragg said, is that high schools and community colleges in Illinois are now establishing partnerships, including incorporating early college-level placement testing when students are still in high school, and having instructors share grading rubrics to better assess where students need to be when they graduate from high school and enter college.

"There was a systemic problem, seeing the K-12 and higher education systems as separate, as well as a lack of understanding between high schools and colleges about the level of competency that students need to enroll in college credit-generating classes," Bragg said.

High-stakes tests such as the SAT, ACT and the myriad achievement

See **ALIGNMENT** on page 7

## WRITING TESTS *from page 2*

The state board had to cut about \$300 million from its fiscal 2010 budget, and expects \$480 million less from the state for its fiscal 2011 budget. Eliminating the writing test will save the state about \$3.5 million.

The state kept writing tasks on the tests at the high school level because many colleges require writing tests for admission.

But some see trouble ahead in nixing the test for the lower grades. Jim

Rosborg, McKendree University's director of graduate education and former superintendent of **Belleville School District 118**, said that while the state's reason for eliminating the writing test is understandable, results could hinder students' education and place a burden on local school districts to test students in writing.

"Because several studies have shown writing skills have a direct connection to reading skills," Rosborg

added, "the lack of a state writing test could also have a negative effect on students' reading skills, and ultimately their futures."

"The writing assessments for grades 3, 5, 6 and 8 will be re-evaluated for the 2011-12 school year," according to State Superintendent of Education Christopher Koch. Koch said the hope is that, in the meantime, budgets may return to the level needed to fund vital education programs.

# Improved alignment between schools, colleges on state's reform agenda

The state's initial application this year for federal Race To The Top (RTTT) grant money included a proposal for improving the alignment between middle and high schools and colleges. The plan contained in the state application would have asked schools to develop "structured, rigorous pathways" to college and work. Relevant passages from that plan are summarized here.

## Illinois' reform agenda

In recent years, the Illinois State Board of Education said, it has "strengthened its commitment that every child should have the opportunity to succeed in post-secondary education and/or career." In the future, Illinois will keep investing all it can toward this purpose and statewide educational improvement. Obtaining RTTT funds, however, would speed educational improvement by broadening and intensifying state reform efforts to:

- **Focus on high schools and the transition to and from high school.** More than 80 percent of underperforming schools in Illinois are high schools. The creation of the Partnership Zone, and the many participating local school districts' commitments to RTTT through memorandums of understanding, will help turn around an unprecedented number of underperforming high schools. School districts – in collaboration with the business community, community colleges, and universities – will establish new programs of study in middle schools and in high schools. Such programs will be designed to give students structured, rigorous pathways to postsecondary education and the workforce.
- **Sustain reform through strong partnerships.** Illinois officials recognize that dwindling state resources will present a tough challenge. To advance its education reform agen-

da, therefore, the state cannot rely solely on the leadership of ISBE. The state board will thus focus its resources on establishing a local school district support system that is responsive, transparent, and accountable, and will use outcomes-based measurement systems. Various measurements will be gathered through these systems to assess and report on the effectiveness of reform efforts, including:

- (i) ISBE's own RTTT support for local school districts,
- (ii) Supports provided through partnership organizations that expand state capacity to lead, and
- (iii) Local school progress toward implementing the RTTT reforms.

Meeting the increased need for critical services will require ISBE to partner with universities, community colleges, businesses, regional support providers, and other organizations.

## ALIGNMENT *from page 6*

tests used to judge adequate yearly progress by states is also part of the problem because they are not aligned with college-level material, Bragg said.

"Those kind of tests tell us a little bit about what a student has learned in high school, but not enough," she said. "Nationally, we really need to get the conversation going between high schools and community colleges about what they teach, how they teach, and what and how they assess. We need to get teachers from both levels on the same page so there's not such a big gap for students."

One idea for reform that is starting to gain some traction would be to allow 10th grade students who pass a series of tests to bypass their junior and senior years and immediately enroll in community college. A poor performance on such a test could provide students with an early warning about the knowledge and skills they need to master in high school before they go off to college. But a trial run

of the idea failed in Oregon in the late 1980s and enormous clout would be needed to make it work here, Bragg said.

"We're already starting to see a blurring of college and career prep programs that are extending into the high schools that recognize all students need the academic skills to be successful in college or the workforce. But it's a little too top-down for our country."

The bigger issue for community colleges, according to Bragg, is the largely undeserved rap that they're a second-class institution of higher education.

"What's really disconcerting is the growth in remedial courses while still needing to hold the line on academic standards," she said. "The dilemma is how you sustain yourself as an institution of higher education when the largest growing number of students are below college level. That's really troubling to community college leaders.

"But if we can align curriculum

better and, for those who need it, find a very effective strategy at the high school level, then we could move a fair number of students out of the remediation track."

Despite the hefty price tag of last year's American Graduation Initiative – \$12 billion over 10 years – Bragg believes that faith in community colleges is more than justified.

"I don't think it's misplaced because where community colleges typically shine is in workforce development," she said. "They have been the higher education institution that has been willing to step up and partner with business and industry to design curriculum around demand. Those ideas are not ones that the rest of higher education has stepped up to very quickly. New programs of study emphasizing college and careers have led high schools to counsel students to take more rigorous coursework in the junior and senior years of high school, in the hopes of avoiding remediation."

# Division meetings cover range of hot topics and information

A wide range of topics—from school funding matters to the latest communications ideas—will be covered at division meetings this fall throughout IASB's 21 divisions.

Beginning on Sep. 9, and concluding on Nov. 4, IASB's fall division dinner meetings are a good place to catch up on school leadership developments, and to share ideas and solutions with fellow school leaders and IASB leadership. The complete schedule is available at IASB's online Events Calendar, which is at <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/>. You can search the entire calendar or select from the drop-down menu by division, area, event type, subject or keyword.

Whether you are a veteran board member or still new to the position, the division dinner meeting represents an opportunity to learn more about schools and school board service. For example, the topic of state legislation and budget moves impacting schools is on the agenda for the Sep. 29 fall meeting of the DuPage Division, assembling at the Carlisle, in Lombard.

Besides presentations on hot topics and legislation, awards of recognition from IASB's Master Board Member Program will be handed out at most such meetings.

Through the latter program each

year, IASB 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 of achieving the Association's mission of excellence in local school governance.

IASB mailed out a form in June 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 Member distinction.

Forms were due July 31. Awards will be mailed if the award winner is not in attendance at the fall division meetings, but that precludes sharing applause and new ideas with winners from other school districts.

The fall division dinner meeting is also a time when you can learn more about school board training opportunities, the upcoming Joint Annual Conference and Delegate Assembly resolutions, hear reports from IASB's

board of directors and division officers, and recognize the work of fellow board members.

Many meetings also will offer a variety of breakout panel sessions similar to the one on legislative developments mentioned above. These presentations will range from school law and finance to state funding and legislative proposals, and many other school management issues.

The division dinner meetings are designed to create a relaxed social setting where school board members and superintendents can network. These informal conversations are often the best way school leaders can discuss how their districts are faring amid the common challenges and opportunities that face public education.

Information about division dinner meetings is mailed to every school board member and district office. Watch your mail in the coming weeks for a brochure that will explain where and when your division event is scheduled and how to register.

For more information about this and other IASB division events and activities, contact your field service staff member (see the updated list of staff at <http://www.iasb.com/training/fieldstaff.cfm>).

Updates on the list of fall division meetings can be found on the IASB Web site at [www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm](http://www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm).

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## OMA and FOIA 'sunshine laws' focus of new legal guidebooks online

The Illinois Compiled Statutes contain two major pieces of legislation designed to provide public access to units of local government in Illinois. Both have been changed in the past year. These "sunshine laws" are:

- The Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120/1 et seq.), which provides public access to the meetings of public bodies;
- The Illinois Freedom of Informa-

tion Act (5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.), which ensures public access to records assembled, gathered, produced and disseminated by public bodies.

IASB has published two booklets – School Board Meetings and School Board Records – as practical guides for school boards and administrators in dealing with the myriad provisions of these two important laws. These guides to the requirements of each

law were written by James P. Bartley and Julie E. Lewis, attorneys at law with Klein, Thorpe and Jenkins, Ltd., Chicago.

They are posted as PDF documents and can be downloaded from the IASB website. You can find the OMA document at: <https://www.iasb.com/law/schboardmeetings2010.pdf>.

The FOIA guidelines are available at: <https://www.iasb.com/law/schboardrecords2010.pdf>.



# Joint Educational Support Professionals Conference on Sep. 21 to develop skills

An unrivaled opportunity for educational support professionals to learn, meet and grow with their peers is coming up at the Joint Educational Support Professionals Conference, Sep. 21, at Northfield Inn and Suites, Springfield.

The event is designed, sponsors say, specifically for support professionals by some of the premiere professional development associations in the education and government finance fields.

Featured speaker Laurie Guest will examine the “Red Carpet Treatment,” discussing how to better manage the day-to-day concerns in the workplace. During this creative opening session, attendees will get the chance to link famous movie moments with real-life situations. They will discover ways to create red carpet service for others, as well, and learn award-winning ideas for achieving their school’s objectives.

Event participants will also discover breakout sessions on a wide range of topics. Hot-button issues will be covered, such as school finance, open meetings, the updated Freedom of Information Act, and tools and technology use for support professionals. But the breakout sessions will also feature discussions on personal growth matters, such as relationship building and time management.

IASB staff members will be among those presenting at breakout sessions, including the following:

- **Using IASB’s Policy Updating Services**

*Anna Lovern, Director of Policy Services; Illinois Association of School Boards and Richard Voltz, Associate Director, Professional Development and Induction/Mentoring; Illinois Association of School Administrators*

Does your district subscribe to PRESS or PRESS Plus? If so, come learn how to get the most from these unique services. If not, come and

see what your district may be missing.

- **Making the Most of Minutes**

*Anna Lovern, Director of Policy Services, Illinois Association of School Boards, Springfield*

Both the Illinois Open Meetings Act and the School Code require that districts keep a written record of all meetings. This lively discussion will address the specific requirements, best practices, and more.

- **Dealing with the Media**

*James Russell, Associate Executive Director/Communications; Illinois Association of School Boards*

Working with the media doesn’t have to be painful. But that doesn’t always mean that it will be painless. Find out how to work with and use the media to maximize your message and minimize your frustration. Traditional and social media resources will be discussed. Bring war stories and solutions to share.

There will also be a powerful, highly informative closing presentation presented by the R.Ed.I Arts and Education Foundation, called Stand Up and Change Teen Statistics. The edgy production is a show that features sketches and scenes that focus on current teen issues. It is based on statistics for teen challenges and concerns.

Registration information and a complete program are available at <http://illinoisspc.com/>.

## Board secretary nominations deadline draws near

Just a reminder: the deadline for submitting all documents to nominate board secretaries for IASB’s Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award is Oct. 1.

## NEWS FROM IASB

### Lone consolidation brings membership count to 855

The state of Illinois saw one recent consolidation of two school districts in Macoupin County, which slightly impacted the count of IASB member districts. Effective July 1, **Virden CUSD 4** and **Girard CUSD 3** became **North Mac CUSD 34**. The consolidation brings the count of IASB member districts to 855. There are 11 non-member districts in Illinois.

### Journal preview: Sept.-Oct. issue to look at what’s changed

How much has education changed during the past 30 years? What do you think education will look like in 2040? Find the answers to those questions and more in the September/October issue of *The Illinois School Board Journal* that will mail in early September.

In addition, the first of a three-part series on school closure, written by four Illinois State University professors, will offer a list of predictors to help you determine whether a school in your district is on a track to close and what the school board, administration and community might be able to do to save it.

### Pre-conference registration deadline approaching soon

To register for 2010 pre-conference events, the \$350 registration fee is due in the IASB Springfield office by 4 p.m. on Sep. 17. Beginning Sep. 18, the registration fee will be \$375.

District badges and packets for registrations received by Sep. 17 will be mailed to the district superintendents on Nov. 5.

Questions on registration procedures for conference can be answered by staff at 217/528 9688, ext. 1115 or 1102.

# Resolutions aim to help schools overcome fiscal woes, create exit exams, consolidate

Below are the policy-setting resolutions that boards submitted for consideration by this year's Delegate Assembly. The assembly meets every year at the Joint Annual Conference to vote on resolutions that, if passed, are adopted as part of the Association's official Position Statements.



Of the 10 resolutions submitted this year, two (school consolidation and student exit exam for high schools) are proposals submitted several times previously. Some of the new proposals relate directly to the current fiscal crisis faced by school districts.

One of the more controversial resolutions offers a plan to allow schools to withhold monthly payroll tax payments to the state department of revenue. The resolution, courtesy of **Indian Prairie CUSD 204**, Naperville, calls upon IASB to push for legislation allowing school districts to set off income tax payments due to the state against amounts owed by the state to school districts. Proponents said it could provide districts with critical funding and lessen the impact of past-due payments on district operations.

Past IASB president and current Indian Prairie board member Mark C. Metzger said the action at least would give school lobbyists a "theme to go back to."

Metzger recently told *The Daily Herald*: "In addition to creating an interesting and clever solution to the financial problem the school districts face, it gives our lobbyists a very effective way to keep a message in front of the General Assembly as they work on the rest of the bills. Even if this weren't the best idea in the world, the fact that it gives an ongoing conversation is itself a valuable tool."

The resolutions committee, chaired by IASB Vice President Carolyn D. Brooks, met on Aug. 6 to review each

of the proposals. The committee took testimony from the submitting districts, deliberated on each proposal, and will make recommendations on Nov. 20 in Chicago.

An 11th proposal, which was not submitted by a local district, will also be considered. The resolutions committee offered it as a "clean-up" to a Position Statement adopted last year regarding Illinois State Board of Education "take-over" of school districts in financial trouble.

The resolutions below are listed by subject, IASB division, and sponsoring district:

1. Consolidation into Unit Districts, Lake Division; Submitted by: **Bar-rington CUSD 220**
2. Attorney General Monitoring, Lake Division; Submitted by: **Woodland CCSD 50**, Gurnee
3. Multi-County School District GSA Offset, Kishwaukee Division; Submitted by: **CSD 158 – Huntley**
4. Budget Stability for School Districts, Kishwaukee Division; Submitted by: **CSD 158 – Huntley**
5. Income Tax Payment Withholding, DuPage Division; Submitted by: **Indian Prairie CUSD 204**, Naperville
6. High School Exams, Central Illinois Valley Division; Submitted by: **East Peoria CHSD 309**
7. Student Academic Placement, Southwestern Division; Submitted by: **Millstadt CCSD 160**
8. Education Funding Stability, Kishwaukee Division; Submitted by: **Indian Creek CUSD 425**, Shabbona
9. TRS Pension Levy, Blackhawk Division; Submitted by: **United THSD 30**, East Moline
10. Freedom of Information Act Changes, DuPage Division; Submitted by: **Keeneyville Elementary SD 20**, Hanover Park
11. ISBE Oversight and Takeover; Submitted by: IASB Resolutions Committee

IASB's existing positions can be found at: <http://www.iasb.com/govrel/positions.cfm>.

## SCHOOL LAW SURVEY Q&A

**Q: Does the state board of education have authority to collect school information from a school district to determine its level of recognition?**

**A:** The state board is authorized to collect information, data, test results, student performance and school improvement indicators with respect to school recognition standards, student performance and school improvement. 105ILCS 5/2-3.25b

**Q: What is state academic early warning and watch status?**

**A:** Those schools that do not meet standards of academic performance and improvement for two consecutive annual calculations are placed on academic early warning status for the next school year.

Schools on academic early warning status that do not meet adequate yearly progress criteria for a fourth annual calculation are placed on initial academic watch status.

The watch and warning standards are controversial and will likely be changed frequently until the controversy is resolved.

105ILCS 5/2-3.25d

**Q: May children be assigned and required to attend a charter school?**

**A:** No. 105ILCS 5/27A-4(g)

Source: *Illinois School Law Survey, Eighth Edition*, by Brian A. Braun, IASB, March 2010, Chapter 1, questions 1:310 through 1:320, and 1:580. For more information or to obtain a copy of the law survey book, contact IASB publications at 217/528-9688, ext. 1108.

# **N**EW HEADLINES

**Arlington Heights** (June 23, *Chicago Tribune*) Several professional athletes participated in a sports legacy institute concussion clinic offered to mainly to coaches and trainers but also parents and athletes recently at John Hersey High School in Arlington Heights. The clinic coincided with Township High School District 214's new protocol for dealing with student athletes suffering from a concussion or other head injury. As drafted by athletic trainers, the guidelines are based on research in the study of degenerative brain conditions caused by sports-related brain trauma. The guidelines spell out what signs officials should look for to determine whether a trainer will allow an athlete to return to play following a head injury, as well as whether 911 should be called.

**Carpentersville, Huntley** (June 25, *The Daily Herald*) In recent weeks, both Community Unit District 300, Carpentersville, and Huntley Unit District 158 have continued to come to grips with the state's fiscal crisis. District 300 this month cut compensation for three employee groups: administrators; secretaries and custodians; and nonunion staff. The cuts are expected to save the district more than \$900,000. Meanwhile, District 158, Huntley, froze salaries for nearly all nonunion staff. The moves have increased pressure on unions in both districts to agree to concessions.

**Chicago** (June 24, *Chicago Tribune*) Chicago elementary school students showed across-the-board gains in annual achievement test results released June 23, although the uptick in reading was slight. Combined results in reading, math and science showed 69.5 percent of Chicago third- through eighth-graders passed Illinois Standards Achievement Tests taken in April, up 2 percentage points from 2009, according to preliminary results released by the district. But

slight progress was recording in student reading. Meanwhile, Chicago Public Schools CEO Ron Huberman warned that the district's current budget difficulties could make future gains even harder to come by. In reading, 65.3 percent of students passed their state tests, up 0.7 of a percentage point. Math rose 3 percentage points, with 75.1 percent of elementary students passing those tests. Science jumped 3.5 percentage points, to 65.3 percent passing.

**Chicago** (June 24, *Chicago Sun-Times*) Chicago School Board members on June 23 voted to limit teacher tenure, agreeing to lay off the worst-rated teachers first — regardless of seniority — amid moves to raise class size and shrink a record budget deficit. Chicago Teachers Union President-elect Karen Lewis immediately blasted the action as “very belligerent” and “very confrontational.” Union attorneys will examine its legality, she said.

**Elgin** (July 14, *The Elgin Courier-News*) Recent state legislation is pushing to make the rite of passage known as bullying a thing of the past. Illinois districts are joining the fight with new anti-bullying efforts that could make schools a safer place this fall. Senate Bill 3266, which took effect June 28, prohibits bullying in schools. It also says school districts should educate students, parents and staff about what constitutes bullying. It requires every district to create and maintain a policy on bullying that is updated every two years. School District U46, Elgin, already does many of those things, Chief Legal Officer Patrick Broncato said.

**Joliet** (June 23, *Chicago Tribune*) Joliet Public Schools District 86 has reached out to two health-promoting chefs at a local community college since the two returned from an anti-obesity program kickoff at the White House in June. At the White

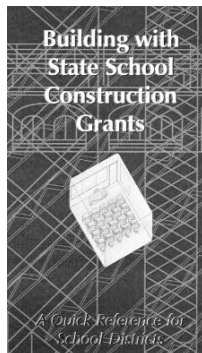
House, more than 100 chefs roamed the grounds and picked vegetables from the garden. In addition, more than 20 Illinois schools in search of a chef — from East Moline to Evanston to Chicago — have listed themselves on the initiative's website at [letsmove.gov](http://letsmove.gov). Almost 20 percent of children are obese, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the number of obese children has tripled in the past 30 years.

**McHenry** (July 9, *Northwest Herald*) McHenry High School District 156 is considering placing two referendums on the November ballot: one for its day-to-day programming and one for a new building. Even with \$2.4 million in budget cuts, District 156 still is projecting a budget deficit. During a finance committee meeting on July 8, board members heard presentations for property tax hikes to help pay for programs and a new building. The last time a property tax hike passed in District 156 was 1971. The district is considering a 50-cent rate increase per \$100 of equalized assessed property value, which would collect an additional \$5.3 million a year, according to estimates.

**Woodstock** (July 13, *Northwest Herald*) A strike by laborers and heavy equipment operators continued, but construction projects at five District 200 schools resumed the morning of July 13. The school board had authorized an agreement with the unions at an emergency meeting on July 12. During the previous week, district officials had said even a one-day work stoppage threatened timely completion. Fortunately work was proceeding ahead of schedule before the strike. Work stalled when a strike was called by equipment operators on July 1. It followed another strike that began the day before, called by laborers. District 200's projects affect about 2,200 students.

## State construction grant program's revival to pick up where it left off back in FY '03

The Illinois State Board of Education has transmitted the priority ranking of school districts entitled to school construction grants from the Capital Development Board. This was done in accordance with Section 5-15 of the state's school construction law (105 ILCS 230/5-15) and the 23 Illinois Administrative Code, Section 151-School Construction Program.



The program had been on hiatus since Fiscal Year 2003.

Jointly administered by the Illinois State Board of Education and the Capital Development Board, the School Construction Program was revitalized with the passage of a capital bill this spring. The legislation provided a \$1.5 billion appropriation for the state-local matching grant program.

The FY2003 application cycle includes 94 applications (excluding Chicago Public Schools), 78 of which are eligible for matching grants under the program. In addition, five emer-

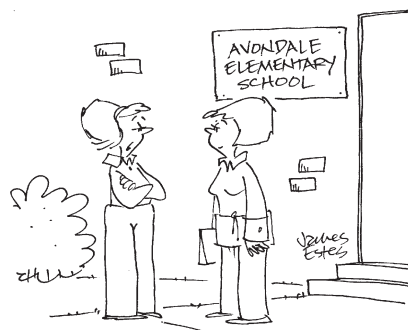
gency applications were submitted for the FY2011 application cycle, four of which were eligible for entitlement.

The state's capital project priority listing can be viewed at: [http://www.isbe.net/construction/html/priority\\_ranking.htm](http://www.isbe.net/construction/html/priority_ranking.htm).

Entitlement letters have been sent to districts that appear on the eligibility list.

Districts that filed applications for FY2004 will be contacted for updated application information, according to the Illinois State Board of Education. Additional bond authorization will be necessary for future funding.

For more information, contact the ISBE's School Business Services Division at 217/785-8779.



*"Just two things stand in the way of my home-schooling our kids: the 'home' part and the 'schooling' part."*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**October 4 – Shawnee Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Egyptian CUSD 5, Tamms

**October 5 – Three Rivers Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Prairie Bluff Golf Club, Lockport

**October 6 – South Cook Fall Division Meeting**, DoubleTree, Alsip

**October 6 – Blackhawk Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Riverdale CUSD 100, Port Byron

**October 7 – Egyptian Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Summersville SD 79

**October 7 – Abe Lincoln Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Riverton CUSD 14

**October 7 – Central IL Valley Fall Dinner Meeting**, East Peoria CHSD 309

**October 14 – Corn Belt Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Indian Creek Country Club, Fairbury

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