

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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Delegate Assembly to weigh 20 resolutions at conference



Delegates at last year's assembly voted to seek and strongly support legislation forbidding public school strikes.

The ASB will submit 20 resolutions for consideration by delegates to the 2011 IASB Delegate Assembly on Nov. 19 in Chicago. Some are proposals that have been previously submitted; however, several new proposals relate directly to the timing of state approval of the education budget and funding for pre-K education.

Below are the 19 policy-setting resolutions that school boards have submitted, plus one resolution submitted by the Association's board of directors. The delegate assembly meets every year at the Joint Annual Con-

See **RESOLUTIONS** on page 8

High Court OK of \$31 billion capital spending plan good news for schools

Plan includes schools with \$3 billion program

July 11 brought good news for schools, construction managers, architects, contractors and bonding firms when the Illinois Supreme Court ruled the state's \$31 billion, six-year capital spending plan is lawful and proper.

The plan's constitutionality had been challenged by a liquor wholesaler on grounds that the bill enacting it did

not stick to one topic as required by the 1970 Illinois Constitution.

The ruling means millions of dollars in regional education, transportation, tourism, nonprofit and health care projects can go forward.

Education projects in the \$31 billion capital plan adopted by state lawmakers in 2009 total \$3.6 billion across the state, with highlights including:

- \$3 billion for the school construction program
- \$200 million for the school

maintenance program

- \$196 million for charter schools
- \$100 million for a new school energy efficiency retrofit program
- \$45 million for a new early childhood facilities program
- \$10 million for student laptop computers

Legal challenges to the plan, funded in part by taxes on liquor and video poker, were brought to Cook County

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Local schools
get tool to boost
college readiness

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Progress report on strategic plan

The Illinois State Board of Education recently submitted a progress report to its strategic plan, as mandated by Public Act 93-1036. Since 2005, ISBE has been required to develop a five-year Comprehensive Strategic Plan for Elementary and Secondary Education and to update it annually. The report for 2011 can be viewed at http://www.isbe.net/reports/strategic_plan11.pdf.

\$270 million for preschool programs

The ISBE has awarded \$269.7 million in preschool grants to help fund about 936 programs serving 3- to 5-year-olds across the state in Fiscal Year 2012. The state funds, part of the Early Childhood Block Grant, are predicted to help about 77,500 children prepare for kindergarten. Funding priority was given to sites that serve a largely low-income population or a high percentage of minority children. ISBE requested competitive bids for all programs in Fiscal Year 2012. The list of districts awarded funds for preschool programs in 2012 can be viewed at: http://www.isbe.net/news/2011/pdf/12_PFA_3-5_RFP_Recommendations.pdf

Anti-obesity resource published

The Illinois Alliance to Prevent Obesity recently published a brochure to help create opportunities for more physical activity in schools and better physical education programs. The group said Illinois ranks third among states with the most obese and overweight children per capita. The brochure includes information on the recent work of the Illinois Enhanced P.E. Task Force, chaired by State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch. The brochure is available online at: <http://www.preventobesityil.org>

Illinois writes off standardized writing test from ISAT exam given high school juniors

In response to the state's budget crisis, the Illinois State Board of Education decided at its June meeting to remove 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. Many universities require the writing test for admission.

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 \$2.4 million.

But some see trouble ahead in dropping the test. 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.

The change was approved by the state board in June and then signed into law by Gov. Pat Quinn on July 1.

Without a state assessment, how-

ever, some school advocates worry that educators may shift the focus instead to high-stakes exams in reading and math, the two subjects by which public schools are measured under the federal No Child Left Behind law.

Assistant Superintendent Stephan Oertle of **Roxana CUSD 1** was emphatic the district will continue "to teach the skills we need to be teaching, regardless of what the state does." But he said the move is unfortunate, "because writing is a huge piece of Language Arts and how students display higher-order, critical thinking skills."

Oertle said one other downside of dropping the writing exam is that schools won't know how their students are doing compared to those around the state and in the area.

Oertle made the remarks in a July 6 article in the *Alton Telegraph* newspaper in a piece titled "Write or wrong: State eliminates standardized writing exam."

Meanwhile, Illinois and 44 other states are transitioning to a new Common Core Standard, with emphasis on literacy and math. With the new Common Core in about three years, there will be new state assessments.

Illinois
SCHOOL BOARD
Newsbulletin

**Illinois Association
of School Boards**

This newsletter is published monthly by the Illinois Association of School Boards for member boards of education and their superintendents. The Illinois Association of School Boards, an Illinois not-for-profit corporation, is a voluntary association of local boards of education and is not affiliated with any branch of government.

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**ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

School boards must pass district budgets before end of September

The end of the first quarter of the fiscal year is fast approaching. In nearly all Illinois school districts the quarter comes to a close on Sep. 30, which is also the last day for the school board to adopt its balanced budget for the 2010-2011 fiscal year.

Although the law requires boards to adopt a balanced budget, the governing statute does not establish a penalty for adopting an unbalanced one. But

an unbalanced budget does trigger a statutory requirement that the school district must adopt and file with the Illinois State Board of Education a deficit reduction plan to balance the budget within three years.

In any case, within 30 days of its adoption the board's annual budget must be filed with the county clerk and the Illinois State Board of Education. These key budget deadlines, for adoption and filing, are contained in state law at 105

ILCS 5/17-1 and at 35 ILCS 200/18-50.

Note: IASB posts a new legal dates calendar online at the end of August each year. Staff members proof the calendar with the Illinois State Board of Elections calendar to verify election-related dates, and the ISBE calendar is not finalized until the middle of August. Dates for August and September of 2011 can be obtained from the current calendar, online at: http://iasb.com/pdf/cal_11.pdf.

Governor's Home Town Award nominations sought from districts

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is inviting public agencies and institutions, including school districts, to nominate their community's best volunteer projects for the 2011 Governor's Home Town Award.

Presented continuously since 1983, the Governor's Hometown Awards Program gives formal recognition to projects that have contributed to their community's quality of life. Awards are made based on population in six categories:

- Beautification and Sustainability Projects:
- Parks and Recreation Projects:
- Memorials and Monuments Projects:
- History & Historic Preservation Projects:
- Services & Mentorship Projects:
- General Projects:

Applications are now available on the DCEO website at: www.illinois-biz.biz/dceo. Use the "Community Development" link on the left hand side of the homepage, and then the Governor's Home Town Awards link.

There are several changes to the process this year so please read all materials carefully. Nominations must be received by Aug. 15.

Questions about this program can be directed to Wendy Bell: wendy.bell@illinois.gov, or by calling her at 217/558-2838.



Speaking at the Lincoln Foundation awards program on Sep. 29 at NIU will be Jerry Weast (left). Here, then-superintendent Weast accepts a 2010 Baldrige Award trophy with the district's school board president Christopher Barclay. Photo by Sean Sedam, *Rockville Patch* online news website.

Lincoln Foundation Symposium will explain awards program for education leaders in state

An unrivaled opportunity for education professionals to learn about the Lincoln Foundation awards program is coming up on Friday, Sep. 29 at NIU in Naperville. Called "Achieving Excellence in Education," the keynote speaker is Jerry Weast, a 2010 Baldrige Award recipient, and the retired district superintendent of the Montgomery County, Maryland school system.

The symposium will also feature a panel presentation by superintendents and board members who have won a Lincoln Foundation award, all talking about taking the mystery out of the Baldrige Award, among other topics.

Information about attending this event will be placed on the Lincoln Foundation web site soon at: www.lincolnaaward.org.

New edition of *Coming to Order* updates old favorite

A newly revised edition of *Coming to Order — A Guide to Successful School Board Meetings* has just been published.

This book is designed for boards that want to use their meetings to reach a higher level of performance as well as those that simply need a cure for bad meetings. The book is newly revised in 2011 with language, policy and statutory updates.

Like previous editions, the latest version explains how to plan and conduct meetings that meet the needs of the individual school board. The newest version, like its predecessor, takes the board meeting beyond compliance with legal requirements to meetings that



serve the interests of both school and community.

The book, which is regularly used in educational administration classes and at school board workshops, it written for both new and experienced board members and should be especially useful to board presidents, secretaries and superintendents.

The 94-page book includes 11 chapters, an extensive appendix and a comprehensive subject index. The chapters cover the following topics:

- The Importance of Good Meetings
- The Agenda – A Road Map to Success
- Legal Requirements for Meetings
- Planning the Meeting
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Conducting the Meeting
- Recording the Meeting
- Inviting the Public to the Meeting
- Working with the News Media

- The New Team: Reorganizing the School Board
- Evaluating the School Board Meeting

Many of the chapters feature exhibits, sample policy or additional information on each subject. There are 10 appendices with documents, procedures, advice, and sample formats. The bibliography contains additional resources available from print or online sources.

Coming to Order – A Guide to Successful School Board Meetings is available from IASB Publications, 2921 Baker Drive, Springfield, IL, 62703. Telephone 217/528-9688, extension 1108; fax 217/528-2831. The price is \$20 (\$15 for IASB members), plus \$5 per order for shipping. The book also may be purchased through the Association's online bookstore at: <http://iasb.com/shop/>.

2011 School Code Supplement book, CD delivered to districts

The Illinois Association of School Boards has received shipment of the 2011 Illinois School Code Supplement.

Copies of the Supplement have been mailed to school districts and others who previously purchased copies of the 2010-2011 School Code Service. Also, from now until the 2012 Code becomes available next year, all new sales of the School Code Service will include both the 2010 Code and the 2011 Supplement. There is no need to place additional orders.

Although the School Code Supplement normally appears as a small booklet that can be pasted inside the back cover of the full School Code, the 2011 version requires a much larger stand-alone booklet. A massive amount of new legislation enacted during the

2010 veto session and the 2011 "lame duck" session has made the Supplement both later and larger than usual.

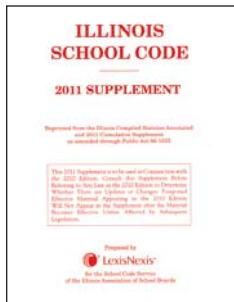
The 2011 Supplement includes an updated CD ROM version of the complete School Code that is current through all of the 2010 legislative session. The CD also includes annotations with case law and other references, all State Board of Education rules and the text of court cases cited in the annotations. The CD is equipped with the Folio Views search engine for easy searching, saving and printing on any personal computer equipped with Microsoft Windows. The CD will not run on Apple or other operating systems.

The 2010-2011 School Code Service also carries a large number of additional statutes pertinent to the public schools, including selected election laws and pension laws, Educational Labor Relations Act, Open Meetings Act, Freedom of Information Act, Economic Disclosure Section of the Governmental Ethics Act, Truth in Taxation

Act, Local Records Act, Personnel Record Review Act, Prevailing Wage Act, Emancipation of Mature Minors Act, Local Government and Governmental Employees Tort Immunity Act, Gift Ban Act, pertinent sections from the Juvenile Court Act, School Visitation Rights Act, and a complete index.

The 2010-2011 School Code Service may be obtained from IASB for \$55 each (\$45 for IASB Members) plus \$5 per order for shipping.

For more information or to place orders, call 217/528-9688, extension 1108, or visit the online bookstore at: www.iasb.com/shop.



"Wipe your feet, wipe your feet, wipe your feet, wipe your feet..."

New board member workshops coming up this fall at multiple locations and dates

Helping new board members get a fast start towards productive board service is a high priority of IASB. Thus the Association has offered a wide array of educational workshops including its newly revised Basics of Governance workshop at multiple locations this summer. So far more than 450 participants have registered and/or participated in these workshops.

The Association will continue to offer other educational workshops in August and September designed especially for newly elected board members, including:

Basics of Law on Board Meetings & Practices, which focuses on the legal requirements of public school boardmanship.

Basics of School District Finance, which teaches new board members about how public school financing works in Illinois.

Boot Camp 3 - Basics of Governance, Law & Finance, which cover

the three basics in a three-day setting.

The dates, times and locations of each workshop can be found online. Registration can be completed by mail, fax or online. Information and registration links also can be found online at: <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm>.

Tuition includes meals and materials. School boards typically reimburse members for the reasonable and necessary expenses in attending such training workshops.

Fees range from \$125 to \$175. The three basics workshops are also offered in a three-day setting, called Boot Camp 3, costing \$400 — a \$75 discount off the cost of the three individual workshops. Discounts on the fees are also given to boards that bring their superintendent.

For a complete listing of these events, see the IASB online calendar at: <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/>. For more information call IASB at ext. 1103.

More events, regional locations highlight new superintendent luncheon gatherings just ahead

First-time superintendents and superintendents new to Illinois are invited to one of several new superintendent luncheons to be held around the state. The aim is to acquaint them with IASB's foundational principles of effective school governance as well as Association products, staff and services.

Superintendents play a key role in the promotion of good governance and IASB stands ready to support that work. This is an opportunity for superintendents to learn the principles of effective school governance, the importance of a quality relationship with their board, and the resources available from IASB.

This year, the luncheons will take place around the state, with multiple dates and locations available. The first one was held Aug. 10 in Lom-

bard, with additional sessions scheduled in Mt. Vernon (Aug. 31), Rock Falls (Sep. 9), Joliet (Sep. 20), and Champaign (Oct. 5). The final event will be back in Lombard (Oct. 20). All luncheons will run from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and registration is free.

Participants will receive a complimentary copy of "Coming to Order," IASB's publication on effective school board meetings. They will also receive a coupon to be redeemed for a future division dinner meeting reservation.

A brochure and online registration is available at www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm.

For further information, contact Judy Niezgodá at 630/629-3776, ext. 1220, jniezgod@iasb.com, or Jenny Harkins at 217/528-9688, ext. 1118, jharkins@iasb.com.

NEWS FROM IASB

'High-ability' students are focus of Journal

Even though the percentage of students who "meet or exceed" state standards is rising, the "exceeds" category by itself seems to be shrinking as students are tested in higher grades. Could it be that schools are not doing enough to challenge high-ability learners?

The September/October issue of *The Illinois School Board Journal* looks at this phenomenon in "Missing the bus on gifted learning." Also in the next issue: how ELL resources are paying big dividends in a suburban district and "Five steps to better boardroom relations."

Basics of Governance workshop well received

IASB's newly revised Basics of Governance workshop was well received at multiple locations recently. While this particular workshop is all wrapped up, other New Board Member Workshops will continue through Sep. 24. So far more than 450 participants have registered and/or participated in these workshops. (See story at left.)

See the online Events Calendar for the next available workshops.

Online applications required for executive searches

The Association's new online application process for executive searches appears to be working well, which means information about and from candidates can be accessed quickly. It also means that candidates can apply and modify their materials at their convenience, with applicants for previous openings having their materials kept on file for any future applications they may be interested in pursuing. In the 2010-2011 school year, IASB conducted 37 of the 58 professionally facilitated superintendent searches in the state.

Enhanced field services for local school boards planned

Survey in fall 2010 a factor in planning

The Association is always looking to review current services and expand professional development for its members. In fact, this was one focus of the Field Services Survey, which was conducted in the fall of 2010.

"IASB's field services department staff heard what board members wanted and we are responding. We thank the 1,200 members who responded to the survey. Our twenty-five percent response rate was remarkable for this type of online survey," said Cathy Talbert, associate executive director for field services and policy services.

As a result of these responses, Talbert said the field services staff has concentrated its improvement efforts in a few specific areas:

Reputation that fits IASB's mission

IASB is focused on the mission of "excellence in local school governance in support of quality public education." In the end, everything that IASB field services does should contribute to this mission, Talbert said.

"We want to encourage boards to strive toward "governance excellence," she said. "We care about school board culture and our reputation, and IASB is committed to maintaining a positive reputation by delivering on our promises."

Regarding IASB's reputation, and the department's, survey respondents provided answers on several key questions:

1) How do board members and superintendents characterize IASB? The following items were the top responses from a total of 776 received to this question (each respondent was invited to share three words):

- helpful/supportive (200)
- professional (180)
- informative (85)/knowledgeable (78)
- educational (82)

2) What are the overall perceptions of IASB? The following percentages of survey respondents said IASB:

- is educational (96%)
- provides high-quality services (95%)
- has a positive reputation (95%)
- as a board member, I am proud that our district belongs to IASB (94%)
- provides worthwhile services (93%)
- services are reasonably priced (86%)
- is indispensable to my district (80%)

3) How favorably are field service directors perceived? Field services directors are regarded favorably by the following percentages of board members and superintendents:

- knowledgeable (97%)
- easily reachable (96%)
- competent in his/her job (95%)
- shows professionalism (96%)
- has positive reputation (94%)
- responsive to our needs (94%)

In-district workshops

Workshops were covered by the survey, as well, because over the past two years staff members have facilitated 469 in-district workshops, with 291 "board self-evaluations" and 178 content workshops.

As Talbert explains: "We are committed to working with whole boards when possible, and in-district workshops have proven the most powerful vehicle for board development. The whole governance team hears the same thing and can decide together how to implement a particular practice at the local level. The conversation can be practical, not just theoretical. And, teamwork is enhanced any time boards spend quality time together."



Cathy Talbert

The survey revealed that board members and superintendents both valued in-district content workshops and wanted to know more about what is available. The two most highly regarded workshops are: "Orienting New Board Members on the Way to Becoming a High-Performing Team" and "Developing and Maintaining an Effective Board/Superintendent Relationship."

In the interim since the survey was created, the department has been working to raise member awareness of the content workshops that are currently available to member school

"We are committed to working with whole boards when possible, and in-district workshops have proven the most powerful vehicle for board development."

— Cathy Talbert

boards, such as, goal setting, board/superintendent relations, new team, superintendent evaluation, successful meetings, and teambuilding. New workshop brochures will identify these options and suggest how to schedule events that meet the needs of each board.

IASB's six field services directors note that they are willing to visit districts and attend board meetings to share information about in-district workshops and other professional development opportunities available.

Board self-evaluations are also truly valued by membership, the survey showed. In fact, IASB gets more requests for board self-evaluations than any other local service. Thus the department has developed more standard options for such self-evaluations, according to Talbert.

"IASB feels strongly about the value for boards to regularly pause and reflect on "How are we doing? What kind of leadership are we providing for the district?"

See **FIELD SERVICES** on page 7

Division meetings will cover the waterfront of hot topics this fall

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 (see list below).

Beginning on Sep. 8, and concluding on Oct. 27, IASB's fall division dinner meetings are a good place to network with other education leaders and stay knowledgeable about timely education issues.

The complete schedule is available at IASB's online Events Calendar: <http://www.iasb.com/calendar>. This calendar can be searched in its entirety, or events can be found in drop-down menus by division, area, event type, subject or keyword.

The division dinner meeting also

provides an opportunity to participate in association governance and learn about IASB resources. The fall meeting is also when IASB's Master Board Members are recognized.

This Master Board Member program recognizes and honors board members for the time and effort they devote to leadership activities and professional development within their district, and participation in IASB and NSBA programs and leadership functions. More information about the Master Board Member program is available at: <http://iasb.com/training/mbm.cfm>.

The fall division dinner meeting will be the first time many of the newly elected board members will attend. They will be welcomed and will hear from IASB leadership and staff.

Many of these dinner meetings are held at local school districts, while others are held at hotels or restaurants. Regardless of location, all are designed to allow both new and veteran board members the opportunity to meet colleagues and network on common issues and concerns.

In addition to the business meeting, all of the events feature either a keynote speaker or a variety of breakout panel sessions. These presentations typically range from school law and finance to state funding and legislative proposals, along with other school governance issues.

Information about each division dinner meeting and registration forms can be found and downloaded from the Events Calendar.

FIELD SERVICES *from page 6*

Division meeting attendance

Division meetings are another important investment for both board members and IASB field services staff. Talbert said the Association wants these meetings to be valuable for board members and superintendents. "As everyone's time is precious, the aim is to plan meetings that fill a variety of needs. Our planning, done in collaboration with the IASB division leadership, must focus on timely and relevant topics and find ways to overcome the obstacles to attendance," she said.

That hope is borne out by survey responses of board members and superintendents, as follows:

1) Division meetings. 58% of the respondents attend one or more division meetings a year.

Top benefits to attendance:

- Staying knowledgeable (67%)
- Networking (59%)
- Educational Opportunities (55%)
- Legislative Updates (48%)
- Professional Development (37%)

Top reasons for not attending:

- Not a convenient time of year (22%)
- Not encouraged to attend (19%)

- Time commitment is too big (15%)
- I don't find the meetings worthwhile (11%)

2) Challenges Faced by School Boards 2010/2011. These top challenges suggest possible future division meeting program topics especially relevant to local boards:

- Finance (87%)
- Student Achievement (71%)
- Collective Bargaining (46%)
- Recruiting new and retaining veteran school board members (44%)
- Developing the Governance Team (16%)

Support for new school leaders

Newly elected board members and newly appointed superintendents are a regular fact of life. Boards need new people to "hit the ground running."

Talbert said IASB can play a part in helping new board members get ready to make a contribution, by offering workshops for new board members. In addition, the staff is available to respond to requests from local boards for "new team" workshops (often called "Starting Right").

This work also involves reaching out to newly appointed superintend-

ents in various ways such as district visits and new superintendent luncheons with programs to make sure they are prepared to partner with their boards, and are aware of the resources and services of IASB.

The survey revealed that new board members and superintendents are plentiful, particularly in some of the 21 geographical divisions of IASB, so it is important that most respondents were happy with the level of support IASB provides for newly-elected board members, veteran board members and new superintendents. Specifically, the survey found:

- 1) Length of board service. How long persons serve on the board varies a bit by division. Across the state 27% of members are in their first four-year term. Fifty percent in the second term, and 23% in the third or greater terms.
- 2) Level of Support from IASB. A majority felt IASB did a good job of supporting new board members (59%).

"These are a few key learnings from an 'early read' of the survey findings," summarized Talbert. She believes the study provides a wealth of information which the field services staff will continue to study and consider.

RESOLUTIONS *from page 1*

ference to vote on resolutions that, if passed, are adopted as official position statements.

The resolutions committee, chaired by IASB Vice President Carolyn D. Brooks, met on Aug. 5 in Oak Brook to review all 20 proposals. The committee took testimony from the submitting districts, deliberated on each proposal, and will make recommendations to adopt or not adopt each measure.

The resolution submitted by the IASB board is intended to add “parity” regarding the mandatory disclosure of compensation and benefits of governmental employees. Because state lawmakers and the governor have added to the financial stress of local school districts, the board of directors wants to add all state legislators to the list of elected officials who must have their salaries and benefits published.

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

- Debt Service Extension Base (modify PTELL law to allow the limited number of school districts that do not have DSEB to have one established for them creating more equity among districts affected by the PTELL and equal opportunity in school funding), Lake County; submitted by **CHSD 17**, Lake Villa
- Establish School Board Member Compensation, South Cook Division; submitted by **Lincoln Elementary SD 156**, Calumet City
- Reduction in Force (School districts would have to be notified of state appropriations by March 1), Kishwaukee Division; submitted by **Aurora West USD 129**
- Line Item Funds — Categorical Payments (require that any reductions in line item funds for categorical payments which are subject to reimbursement by the state (e.g. transportation or special education) shall be prospective only and shall not affect such line item costs incurred by a school district prior to such reduction but not yet claimed or

approved for reimbursement.), Kishwaukee Division; submitted by **Aurora West USD 129**

- School Buses for Transportation (allow districts to make better use of tax funded school buses by enabling them to be used, under contract, for other governmental, not-for-profit, or private school events), Kishwaukee Division; submitted by **Aurora West USD 129**
- Residential Facility Invoicing, Kishwaukee Division; submitted by **Aurora West USD 129**
- Timeline for Organizational Meetings after Elections (extend deadline for boards to organize), DuPage Division; submitted by: **CCSD 93**, Bloomingdale
- District Reorganization (require sweeping revisions in law governing consolidation), DuPage Division; submitted by **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**
- State Aid Payments (require the state to make general state aid payments to districts, on a monthly basis, during the entitlement year and to pay interest on late payments), DuPage Division; submitted by **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**
- Board Rights (push for right of boards to take action on reductions in force up to sixty calendar days following the date elementary and secondary appropriation bills become law), DuPage Division, submitted by **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**
- GSA Formula to include Pre-K Students, Two Rivers Division; submitted by **Triopia CUSD 27**
- No Child Left Behind (require sweeping revisions in NCLB law to remove school district sanctions, high-stakes testing, etc.), Corn Belt Division; submitted by **Woodland CUSD 5**
- Tax Assessments (require timely notification between county assessors of substantial adjustments to assessed values for a taxing district that has assessed property in multiple counties), DuPage Division; submitted by **Consolidated SD 158**,

Huntley

- Prevailing Wage Act (seek education of lawmakers, governor, etc., to enact changes exempting school construction projects), DuPage Division; submitted by **Hinsdale THSD 86**
- Lease Property for Income for School Districts, South Cook Division; submitted by **Hoover Schrum SD 157**, Calumet City
- Advertise for Local Businesses to Generate Revenue, South Cook Division; submitted by **Hoover Schrum SD 157**, Calumet City
- Student Academic Advancement, South Cook Division; submitted by **Hoover Schrum SD 157**, Calumet City
- Salary Caps for administration and teaching staff, South Cook Division; submitted by **Hoover Schrum SD 157**, Calumet City
- Preschool Program (include preschool students in school districts’ Average Daily Attendance totals for school funding purposes), Southwestern Division; submitted by **Alton CUSD 11**
- General Assembly Website include Salary & Benefits of Governmental Officials; submitted by IASB Board of Directors

“The resolutions we’ve received cover a multitude of important topics of keen interest to school board members. But most of them trace back to funding concerns and to the financial difficulties schools are facing in these tough times,” said Ben Schwarm, IASB’s associate executive director for advocacy and governmental relations.

Schwarm said IASB’s yearly Report to the Membership publication for 2011 will provide fuller detail about each of the resolutions, including the resolutions themselves and the sponsors’ rationales. The report is expected to be printed by late August and the target mailing date is Sep. 1, 2011.

IASB’s existing positions can be found at: <http://www.iasb.com/gov-rel/positions.cfm>.

College readiness reports profile all states high schools

School leaders get tools to boost student success

How well is your high school preparing students for success in Illinois postsecondary institutions?

Now there is a way to get detailed information on that topic, thanks to the availability to school leaders of ISBE's new *High School to College Feedback Report*, developed around scores from the ACT college readiness tests.

Released in July, the reports focus on high school graduates' transition to college, with each individual high school in Illinois profiled. The reports are newly available at the website of the Illinois Interactive Report Cards: <http://iirc.niu.edu/>.

Charts and tables presented in the report for each school describe performance indicators for the ACT-tested public high school graduates of 2006-2008 who attended a public postsecondary institution in Illinois in the fall of 2006 through 2008. Suggested next steps for using this information are provided to help guide school leaders' thinking as they strive to improve the academic development of students and boost success in college.

The importance of academic preparation for college or work is greater than ever today, the reports say. According to the authors, 68 percent of the top 50 occupations require postsecondary education. Clearly, students need to be ready for education beyond high school, and the goal of these reports is to promote actions that will assist all students in being prepared.

To measure academic preparation, the new reports use ACT College Readiness Benchmark Scores and College Readiness Standards Score Ranges.

College Readiness refers to the level of student preparation needed to be ready to succeed — without remediation — in an introductory level course

See **COLLEGE** on page 12



Crystal Johnson, new district superintendent at **Rossville-Alvin CUSD 7**, is also the grade school principal.

New Rossville-Alvin superintendent said to be among youngest in Illinois

Among the state's youngest superintendents, as reported in a local newspaper, is Crystal Johnson, the new **Rossville-Alvin CUSD 7** superintendent.

Johnson took on superintendent duties on July 1, after serving as the grade school principal in the district since July 2009. She will continue to serve as principal of the pre-K-8 school.

Johnson has the distinction of being perhaps the youngest Illinois schools superintendent, according to an Illinois State Board of Education spokesman.

"I'm very confident she can do the job and will do it well," said school board President Bob Ray, who was not on the board when Johnson was hired.

"She has all of the qualities I've seen in the good administrators that I've worked with," continued Ray, who served on the board for eight years in the 1980s and 1990s. "She takes a lot of pride in her work. Her work ethic is excellent, and she's displayed that she's willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done and see that it's done well.

Indeed, since coming to the district in 2009, Johnson has held several other posts besides principal and

superintendent, including athletic director and assistant superintendent.

Johnson hails from East Peoria. She earned a bachelor's degree in special education from Illinois State University and a master's degree in educational administration from Eastern Illinois University. She finished work on her superintendent's endorsement at Eastern Illinois University last August and she received it after she had garnered a good deal of administrative experience.

Johnson taught third-, fourth- and fifth-grade special education in the East Peoria school district from 2006 to 2008. She taught English for special-education 11th-graders at Pekin High School for a year before becoming an administrator in the Rossville-Alvin district.



PRESS Service issue offers new sample policy on social media usage, conduct

Social media, also known as social networking, is here to stay and employers need to address it. Some explanations describe it as a “digital version of a relationship.”

School officials understand that social media provides a perceived sense of security that can often make people feel quite comfortable disclosing details about their work and life to complete strangers. This perception creates unique risks that school districts must manage and it underscores the demand from school districts, including those that subscribe to the Policy Reference Education Subscription Service (PRESS) for a “Facebook policy.”

The June PRESS issue contains a new sample policy in response to this demand. Its title is “*Personal Technology and Social Media; Usage and Conduct.*” It defines social media and personal technology and lists appro-

priate usage and conduct expectations that cross reference prior established policies. The footnotes provide options and explain that this issue is an unprecedented area of the law that involves employees’ First Amendment rights.

It also contains caveats that the policy and/or its implementation may trigger collective bargaining requirements, which require boards to consult the board attorney before adoption or implementation.

While social media and employees’ use of their personal technology present similar risk management issues for all school districts, each board and its community may have very different philosophies on social media and personal technology usage and conduct. Thus the PRESS policy stresses the importance of focusing on appropriate behavior, and encourages a school board to further discuss its expectations with the superintendent and board attorney.

SPENDING PLAN, from page 1

Circuit Court by Chicago Blackhawks owner and liquor wholesaler Rocky Wirtz. The challenge lost in circuit court, but won on appeal, leading to the final ruling that upheld the plan.

“That’s good news for us,” said Patrick Zuroske, the city of Rockford’s capital program manager. “We really feel like we’re back in a position where those projects will not get delayed.

“This is a big deal,” said Steve Ernst, executive director of the Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning. “We now know these projects will move forward.”

The Illinois Department of Transportation says some projects will begin this year, but most of the work will be in 2012.

Besides liquor and gambling taxes, sources of revenue for the plan include vehicles, candy, soda, the lottery, video gambling, bottled products and other items.

Source: *Rockford Register Star*, “Court OK clears way for Illinois’ capital spending plan,” Jul 12, 2011.

Social networking also a potential communication tool for schools

By Tricia Smith, NSBA intern

Social media is huge. All of us are constantly plugged into more and more social networks every day. Facebook is the No. 2 website in America, according to Alexa.com, and its fastest-growing demographic is people over age 35. So why aren’t schools using more social media?

The easy answer is: because interactions between schools and social networking sites have not gone so smoothly in the past. Two court cases in different Pennsylvania districts where students posted defamatory comments about their principals on social networking sites show how sticky the situation can become. What’s more, the decisions (*J.S. v*

Blue Mountain School District and *Layshock v Hermitage School District*) were at odds with one another, proving we have a ways to go before we come up with concrete rules about how to use social media in schools.

But imagine that instead of being used by students with smartphones and grudges against the administration, these sites were being used in a professional manner by educators.

On his blog *AssortedStuff.com*, Instructional Technology Specialist for Fairfax County [Virginia] Schools Tim Stahmer said that the district’s PR department is circulating a document that details how they would utilize new social media.

Stahmer doesn’t seem too thrilled with the proposal, and I can see why. The document said that Fairfax could use social media to, “Reinforce messages... Educate stakeholders. Pro-

mote good news. All one-way, us to them, broadcasting...mostly as a link to press releases.”

A link to press releases? Isn’t that what good old websites and e-mail are for? Schools have a golden opportunity when it comes to social media as a source for feedback from the community. With so many schools in trouble and ideas for education reform bouncing off the walls this is the perfect moment for schools to lend a digital ear to what the parents and community members in their district have to say.

Source: NSBA, *School Board News*, April 2010, Tricia Smith

Note: Both cases cited in this column have to do with student, not employee, conduct, and have been decided by the third circuit court of appeals. The *Newsbulletin* will report on their outcome this fall.



NEWS HEADLINES

Aurora (July 8, *Beacon News*) Gov. Pat Quinn's recent \$89 million in cuts to the transportation portion of the state budget will leave Aurora West USD 129 with the same reduced levels they received in 2011. While the district did not eliminate any of its services last year, state cuts forced it to look at alternative sources of revenue to continue transporting students. The reduced funding is not in advance of services, but covers a reimbursement for services provided, Superintendent James Rydland said. "It is absolutely unacceptable," Rydland said. "That process of after-the-fact cuts has to change." State law obligates districts to bus all students who live more than 1.5 miles from a school.

Cahokia and East St. Louis area (June 30, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*) The Illinois State Board of Education is sending \$74.9 million in federal school improvement grants to 13 schools over the next three years. The bottom 5 percent of schools in the state were eligible, though no school in the so-called Metro East is a recipient. Cahokia and East St. Louis districts applied for grant money for their high schools. However, Cahokia's application didn't score high enough, and East St. Louis's application was incomplete, said Mary Fergus, spokeswoman for the Illinois board.

Chicago (June 27, *Chicago Tribune*) The Chicago Public Schools will hand out pink slips to 1,000 teachers in the district's annual reduction in force for the teaching staff. Most of the layoff notices are planned because of enrollment declines or consolidations of 10 schools, but others result from school-based budget cuts to about 150 supplemental teaching positions, and program reductions. District officials have vowed that any cuts to narrow the \$712 million deficit will not touch class sizes. New schools chief Jean-Claude Brizard promised in a letter to parents that the district will not

increase class sizes and will maintain funding levels for early childhood education despite proposed state cuts.

Chicago (July 1, *Chicago Tribune*) Chicago District 299 is considering a revenue increase to collect \$100 million more in property taxes and seek further cuts at central office and in middle management positions. Such moves may be required to bridge a large deficit. The board of education will consider whether to approve the maximum property tax increase allowed under state law, which would mean higher tax bills for residents, although estimated average increases still are undetermined. In December, the district filed notice it would levy taxes up to the maximum allowed by the tax cap law, as it does every year to leave its options open. By spring, taxing bodies can opt to reduce the amount said Courtney Greve, spokeswoman for the Cook County clerk's office.

Crystal Lake (July 20, *Northwest Herald*) About two years after losing more than \$300,000 when its computer system was hacked, Crystal Lake District 47 is suing the bank. According to the lawsuit, unknown individuals hacked into the District 47 computer system in June 2009 through a "Clampi virus" and gained access to user names and passwords. That information then was used to access an online banking system where the district had an account to make direct deposit payroll payments for employees. The bank owed a duty of reasonable care to the district to ensure the accounts were monitored and secure, according to the lawsuit. District 47 officials said the suit was filed by an insurance cooperative the district belongs to, aiming to collect money paid out in claims. The district has already been fully reimbursed by its insurance company.

East St. Louis (July 5, *Belleville News Democrat*) East St. Louis District 189 has warded off a potential

\$18 million budget deficit through job elimination, including 168 non-certified jobs cut this year, according to interim Superintendent Jed Deets. Deets, the former regional superintendent in St. Clair County and former superintendent in Cahokia District 187, began his first day on July 1 as the interim superintendent for the district that was taken over by the state one month earlier. The state board took over all financial, hiring and educational control in June. A combination of earlier teacher layoffs plus two rounds of job eliminations resulted in a projected savings in the \$17 million to \$18 million range, Deets said.

Pekin (June 30, *Pekin Daily Times*) Pekin CHSD 303 recently joined a nationwide effort to ditch the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). The school board joined a nationwide petition drive calling for at least a temporary reversion to the federal school standards used before enactment of NCLB. The petition has been crafted and circulated by the National School Board Association and says the NCLB law is "flawed and in need of improvement." According to the petition, the law "does more harm than good" and misrepresents the accomplishments of schools.

Springfield (July 5, *The State Journal-Register*) Few schools have gay-straight alliance support groups, while some also lack policies that specifically deal with sexual-orientation bullying, according to Shannon Sullivan, director of the Illinois Safe Schools Alliance, which promotes safety and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. "I think that more work does need to be done to organize (alliances)," Sullivan said. A national education group contended in a recent report that Illinois schools in general lack support groups and comprehensive bullying policies.

at a two- or four-year institution, trade school, or technical school. A College Readiness Benchmark Score is the minimum score needed on an ACT subject-area test to indicate a 50 percent chance of obtaining a B or higher or about a 75 percent chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing college courses.

Scores were derived based on the actual performance of students in these college courses.

What are College Readiness Standards (CRS) and CRS Score Ranges? College Readiness Standards (CRS) are detailed research-based descriptions of

the skills and knowledge associated with what students are likely to know and to be able to do based on their PLAN and/or ACT test scores. For each content area – English, mathematics, reading, and science – standards are provided for score ranges along a scale common to the ACT (1-36); the ranges are 1-15, 16-19, 20-23, 24-27, 28-32, and 33-36. These ranges are CRS Score Ranges.

The report concludes with a list of four web links where guidance is available in developing college readiness:

- On course for success: a close look at selected high school courses that prepare all students for college:

<http://www.act.org/path/policy/reports/success.html>

- Preparing all high school students for college and work: what high-performing high schools are teaching: <http://www.act.org/news/releases/2005/2-23-05.html>

- Crisis at the core: preparing all students for college and work: <http://www.act.org/path/policy/reports/crisis.html>

- ACT's College Readiness Standards information, including tips on how the standards can be used to link assessment to instruction: <http://www.act.org/standard>

Preview of 2011 Joint Annual Conference due with schedule, details of all 115 panels

A preview booklet for the 2011 Joint Annual Conference that will soon be available online will include a master schedule of the major conference events, descriptions and time slots for all 115 panel sessions, and descriptions of pre-conference workshops.

This year's event will be the 79th Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators and Illinois Association of School Business Officials in Chicago.

As mentioned, 115 panel sessions have been planned for attendees over the course of the three-day conference. Included are numerous panels designed to help schools save money, boost revenue or explain school finances.

For example, the session on Communicating School Finances will feature tips on helping the public understand the facts and nuances of school finance. School communications and business experts will explain how to do just that.

The conference will also include pre-conference workshops, a tour of Chicago public schools, a Carousel of Panels, professional development activ-

ities for board and district secretaries, coffee and conversation sessions, three inspirational general-session speakers, annual Delegate Assembly, bookstore, and much more.

Early registration is \$360 per registrant. After Oct. 17, the registration fee will be \$385.

Members can find both registration and housing forms and instructions online at: <http://iasb.com/jac11/registrationforms.cfm>. These forms, along with deposits and/or fees, must be mailed or delivered to IASB.

In addition to the Conference Preview, everyone attending the conference will receive a copy of the official Conference Program. And by early November, IASB will post online a personal conference planner and a list of panel handouts.

Between now and November, school boards are encouraged to draft and adopt a resolution confirming their desire to attend the conference and support for professional development for the board.

More information about this year's conference can be found at: <http://iasb.com/jac11/>.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 8 – Starved Rock Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Seneca's Oak Ridge, LaSalle

September 9 – New Superintendents' Luncheon, Candlelight Inn, Rock Falls

September 10 – Basics of School District Finance, IASB, Springfield Office

September 12 – Basics of Law on Board Meetings & Practices, IASB, Springfield Office

September 13 – Wabash Valley Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Neoga CUSD 3, To Be Determined

September 13 – Basics of Law on Board Meetings & Practices, Holiday Inn, Carbondale

September 14 – Professional Advancement – Seeking the Superintendency, IASB, Lombard

September 15 – Basics of Law on Board Meetings & Practices, NIU, Naperville

September 20 – New Superintendents' Luncheon, Thayer's 158 North, Joliet

September 20 – Professional Advancement – Seeking the Superintendency, IASB, Springfield

September 21 – North Cook Division Fall Dinner Meeting, LaCave Banquets, Des Plaines

September 21 – Kishwaukee Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Marengo CHSD 154, Marengo

September 22 – Illini Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Mattoon CUSD 2, Mattoon

September 24 – Basics of School District Finance, Holiday Inn, Carbondale