

# Illinois SCHOOL BOARD *Newsbulletin*

September 2010 / Issue No. 701



**New superintendents welcomed.** IASB Field Services director Larry Dirks offers aid, comfort and a warm welcome to attendees on Aug. 12 at the Springfield luncheon event for individuals new to the superintendency. (See story, p. 3)

## April election changes covered in packets of newly published help Election packets list new 2011 dates, deadlines, more

Recent changes in state election law have left school districts considerably less time to prepare for the next Consolidated Election on April 5, 2011, which includes the election of school board members.

The changes were contained in Public Act 96-1008 (Senate Bill 3012), effective July 6. This legislation shortened the time period for petition filing (both candidate and referenda), withdrawals, filling vacancies, objections, ballot certification, and the submission of public questions.

In each instance, the new dates were moved up by several weeks compared to the deadlines or dates set under the previous law. The Illinois State Board of Elections will publish an official calendar of those dates and deadlines; however, those dates were not available at presstime for the *Newsbulletin*.

IASB has published its calendar and links to other essential election material and information online at:

See **ELECTION** on page 12

## Number of superintendent turnovers unchanged from last year's total of 112

Illinois school districts saw no change in superintendent turnover during the past year, as 112 superintendent changes took place in 2010, compared to the same number in 2009.

This count of superintendent turnovers is not particularly high compared to typical numbers over the past eight years, according to Donna Johnson, director of executive searches at IASB. "We are actually down on average from recent years," Johnson said.

Superintendent turnover averaged 148 per year from 2003 through

2007, and dropped to just 98 in 2008. State-imposed retirement incentive programs had a lot to do with that drop off, added Dawn Miller, an IASB executive searches consultant.

The total has been higher of late, however, because, "We don't have those extra retirement bumps," she said.

Recent numbers show that various search consultants assisted Illinois school districts in 53 searches. IASB staff accounted for 38 of those

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## 2010 Burroughs Award nominations are sought

There is still time to nominate board presidents for the Thomas Lay Burroughs Award. The deadline for the Illinois State Board of Education to receive nominations is Oct. 15.

Created in 1991 in memory of the late ISBE chairman, the award is presented every November at the Joint Annual Conference of IASB, IASA and Illinois ASBO. This year's conference will be held Nov. 19-21, and the award will be presented on Sunday, Nov. 21.

For more information, phone ISBE's Jean Ladage at 217/557-6626. Nominations may be sent via e-mail to Ladage at [jladage@isbe.net](mailto:jladage@isbe.net). Please indicate in the subject line of the email: Burroughs Nomination.

## Guidelines are released on required food allergy policies

The state has now released its *Guidelines for Managing Life-Threatening Food Allergies in Illinois Schools*. By Jan. 1, 2011, every school board is required to implement a policy based on these guidelines, according to Public Act 96-0349. An in-service training program for school personnel must be conducted by specified health experts at least every two years.

The guidelines, which include checklists and training resources, is available at [http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/food\\_allergy\\_guidelines.htm](http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/food_allergy_guidelines.htm).

Note: a sample policy will be developed by IASB's Policy Reference Education Subscription Service (PRESS). All subscribers will receive the publication by early fall. IASB will also provide the sample policy to member districts and any non-member districts that request it.

For more information, contact Nutrition Programs Division at 800/545-7892 or [cnp@isbe.net](mailto:cnp@isbe.net).

## Registration now open for NSBA's annual convention in San Francisco

Now is the time to consider attending the National School Boards Association's 2011 Annual Conference, to be held April 9-11 in San Francisco.

Registration for the 71st annual conference began Sep. 1 and Dec. 30 is the deadline to qualify for the early registration discounts. Registration fees are \$860 (or \$695 for National Affiliates). After Dec. 30, those fees go up to \$895 and \$720, respectively.

The NSBA housing bureau will begin accepting reservations on Tuesday, Oct. 12, at 8 a.m. All registrants will need a conference confirmation ID number to reserve rooms. The quickest way to receive a confirmation number is to provide NSBA with

an e-mail address. NSBA is suggesting that participants register by Oct. 4 to make sure they have a confirmation ID number before housing opens.

Pre-conference workshops will be held on Friday, April 8, so housing reservation makers should consider the extra day's lodging. NSBA is offering conference rates at 21 hotels near the Moscone Convention Center.

This year's general session speakers include Condoleezza Rice, Daniel Pink and Juan Enriquez.

Although some details of the 2011 conference are still being finalized, updates will be posted on the conference website at: <http://www.nsba.org/conference/>.

## Peoria to host annual principals conference featuring new mentor workshops, ideas, tools

The 39th Annual Principals Professional Conference, with the theme "Serving Children...with Passion, Purpose, & Persistence," will be held at the Peoria Civic Center on Oct. 17-19.

The conference will feature general session speakers including State Superintendent Chris Koch; John Draper, CEO, Educational Research Service; Karen Dyer, group director, Center for Creative Leadership; and Bonnie Blair, U.S. Olympic gold medalist. More than 50 small group sessions on a variety of topics affecting administrators and schools will be offered.

Another important feature at this year's IPA conference will be a new principals and mentors workshop on Monday, Oct. 18. IPA and Eastern Illinois University New Leaders Assistance Service will offer additional information about the Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program, tools and resources for new principals, ideas to address areas of concern, and discussions on leading schools.

Among the presenters in breakout sessions will be Patrick Rice, IASB

director of field services, Springfield. Rice will discuss staff collaboration through professional learning communities, on Tuesday at 8 a.m.

For more information about the conference visit the IPA conference website [http://www.ilprincipals.org/pages/pro\\_dev\\_conferences.html](http://www.ilprincipals.org/pages/pro_dev_conferences.html).

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

**Illinois Association  
of School Boards**

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**ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION  
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

# Luncheon events acquaint new district leaders with services

## Staff shares ropes with novice superintendents

About two dozen school administrators – new superintendents for 2010-11 school year – attended one of two luncheons sponsored by IASB at its Springfield and Lombard offices in mid-August. The luncheons were designed to acquaint those new to the superintendency with IASB services and sponsored programs.

Brent Clark, executive director of the Illinois Association of School Administrators, and Michael Jacoby, executive director of the Illinois Association of School Business Officials, addressed the new superintendents briefly about their respective associations and how all four of the school management groups, including IASB and the Illinois Principals Association, work together.

A highlight at both luncheons was comments made by first-year superintendents from a year ago. Jennifer Garrison, superintendent of **North Sandoval CUSD 501**, spoke in Springfield, noting “It was so valuable to use the Association to get where we are today.” Susan Haddick, superintendent of **Norridge District 80**, likewise told the Lombard gathering some of her first-year reflections.

Michael D. Johnson, IASB’s executive director emeritus, told the admin-

istrators that the Association is uniquely qualified to assist them in their new positions. About half of IASB staff members are education professionals or former school board members, he noted, which adds another perspective to and informs the Association’s resources and training assistance.

Also making remarks on behalf of IASB at the Lombard event were: Cathy Talbert and James Russell, associate executive directors of policy/field services and communications, respectively; Cynthia Woods, director of advocacy; Kimberly Small, assistant general counsel; Steve Clark, TAG consultant; Sandra Kwasa, board development consultant; and Barbara B. Toney and Jeffery Cohn, field service directors.

Addressing new superintendents in Springfield were Johnson and Russell, Larry Dirks, field services director; Douglas P. Blair, retired senior director of executive searches, Susan Hilton, assistant director of governmental relations; Nesa Brauer, board development consultant; Nancy Bohl, policy services consultant; and Deb Larson, TAG consultant. Other staff also attended both events.

Johnson, who served as a superintendent for 18 years, acknowledged that the job can be “lonely,” and reminded the guests that they are “temporary custodians” as the chief administrator of their new school dis-

tricts.

He said that there are two urgent tasks facing each new superintendent that, if they fail to accomplish, could result in shorter job tenure. One was getting hotel room reservations made for the Joint Annual Conference. The other was renewing the school district’s insurance policies before they expire.

Johnson also noted that superintendents will be better served if they rely on budget forecast ranges instead of estimates. “You can get burned by estimates if they are off either way; it’s best to give a range so that your budget numbers are flexible and realistic regardless of how the circumstances change throughout the year,” he said.

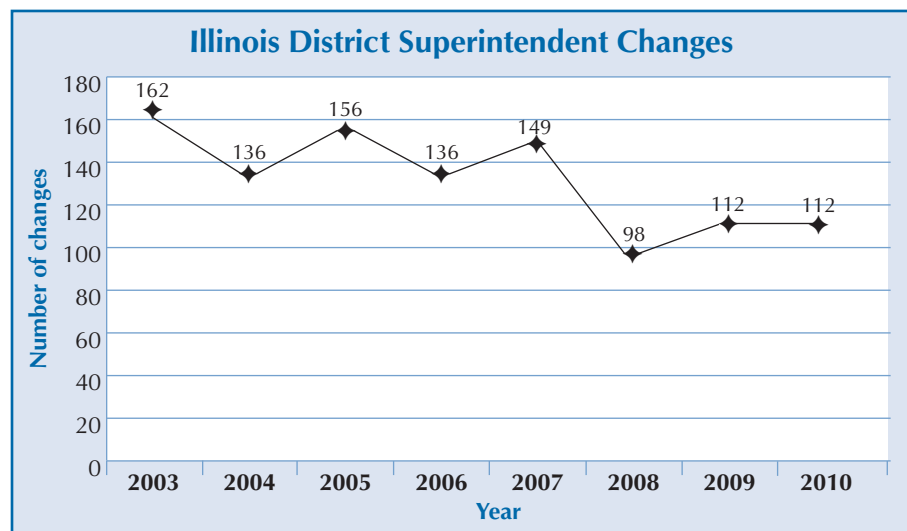
But perhaps his most important advice to the new executives was getting to know their local board members. Johnson referred to the opportunity for making such acquaintances while traveling to and from IASB division meetings in the fall and spring, or the annual conference in November.

Blair, who is also a former school superintendent, said he knows how lonely the superintendent’s job can be. “That’s why IASA and IASB provide plenty of opportunities to speak freely. Neither are regulators, so what you discuss with us is confidential,” he said.

## TURNOVER *from page 1*

searches, with the remaining 15 split up by four private firms, and 72 conducted independently by local school districts, without professional assistance.

Thomas Leahy, another IASB consultant, noted that IASB executive searches has expanded from just offering superintendent searches to other school administrative positions as well, including assistant superintendents, business managers and other executives. IASB assisted nine such searches in the past year.



# Governor aims to distribute federal teacher hiring funds fast

## Some leaders skeptical of windfall job money

Gov. Pat Quinn on Aug. 17 officially applied to get \$415 million from the federal government to help Illinois schools hire more teachers. Congress approved the controversial additional spending earlier that month, in legislation focused on reducing the number of teacher layoffs in local school districts across the nation.

The legislation provided \$10 billion to help save an estimated 160,000 jobs nationwide, including nearly 5,700 teaching positions in Illinois.

“In a matter of weeks, Illinois will have this money so that many of our hard-working teachers of our state can get back to work ensuring students receive the best education possible,” Quinn stated.

On Aug. 17 the governor submitted Illinois’ application for funds to the U.S. Department of Education, which had been made available on Aug. 13. ISBE has been told it may take two weeks to process the application and get the money here.

“The governor has indicated he wants to see the funds flowing to districts as soon as possible, so within a few weeks from now we should begin to see districts receiving funds,” ISBE spokesman Matt Vanover said on Aug. 25

“It’s our understanding that the

governor and comptroller believe that it would not require the General Assembly to come back immediately to appropriate the funds,” Vanover said.

The Illinois State Board of Education has already approved giving State Superintendent Chris Koch the authority to distribute the money efficiently. Superintendent Koch has since provided direction to local school districts about the distribution of the money. Koch stated:

To assist you in your planning, we have posted preliminary calculations for gross GSA and Education Jobs Funds. These are preliminary numbers that will likely change and should only be used for planning purposes at this time, but will give you a good idea of what you can expect to receive. You can access the district estimates for GSA and the additional Education Jobs Fund bill estimates at [http://www.isbe.net/funding/excel/ed\\_stimulus\\_jobs11.xls](http://www.isbe.net/funding/excel/ed_stimulus_jobs11.xls). We will notify ... once final allocations are posted.

I know there are many questions about how to use the Education Jobs Fund bill money. I would encourage you to review the federal guidance to local schools, which can be found at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/educationjobsfund/applicant.html>. You will not be required to fill out a new application, but the same transparency and accountability measures required under the provisions of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act State Fiscal Stabilization Fund (ARRA-SFSF) funds are required of these dollars.

These funds are required to be used to pay salaries and benefits for school-level personnel. Many of you had planned to use local funds this year to pay for some salaries and benefits. The guidance states that you can use these new federal funds for the purposes of retaining existing staff. Like the ARRA-SFSF funds, you will be expected to provide quarterly reports on jobs retained, saved or created.

It is the intent of the governor to get these funds to you as close to the beginning of the school year as possible. We have submitted the application to the U.S. Department of Education and they have indicated it will take them a couple of weeks to review and sign off on the application. We will provide you with more information as it becomes available.

In the meantime the governor’s office is determining whether the Illinois general assembly has to come back to approve the appropriation, so it could be well into September before a determination is made.

Statewide, many teachers are in the same kind of budgetary limbo. The money Illinois receives could potentially hire back more than 5,000 teachers, but ISBE can’t confirm that number.

By law, school districts must tell teachers whether they are being cut by March or early April; often school districts lay off teachers in the spring and rehire them in the fall once the

See **FUNDS** on page 5

## Illinois falls short in second round of federal Race to the Top grant competition

It was announced at press time that Illinois has come up short a second time in its attempt to get federal school-reform grant money. The state was a finalist in the first “Race to the Top” grant competition, and had hoped to get \$400 million this time. But the U.S. Education Department named nine states and the District of Columbia as recipients in the final round of stimulus program funding.

Some school leaders said the state’s bid was hurt by its poor fiscal and economic condition, and related concerns about Illinois’ ability to continue and expand the programs after federal money dried up.

Ben Schwarm, associate executive director for advocacy and governmental relations of the Illinois Association of School Boards, noted that IASB had declined to submit a letter of endorsement for the federal

program. The exhaustive, convoluted application form was difficult to get through, and some school board members were concerned about how long the money would last, Schwarm said.

Some board members have expressed concern, as well, about the growing federal intrusion into local control that this grant program seemed to demand. Local control of schools could disappear, they said.

general assembly passes a state budget. With budget uncertainties school districts might err on the side of being conservative, ISBE suggests.

While the federal stimulus is expected to help Illinois schools, the state remains far behind in paying its obligations to local schools estimated by some to be \$4 billion. School officials said the state still owes Illinois school districts about \$742 million that they were supposed to receive by the end of June.

In addition to the federal law's education funds, another \$16 billion is earmarked for Medicaid, of which Illinois' portion could be in excess of \$500 million. Some, including Koch, say that money could free up pressure on other areas of state spending, such as education.

But some local school leaders sound a bit more cautious, saying they can only work with the funds they have in district accounts when the school year begins. They say they have learned to be skeptics regarding windfalls from a state government that is unable to deliver on all of its funding promises.

"If we get some jobs money, will I go out and hire a bunch of new teachers? I don't know. ... That doesn't get us out of the financial hole we're in," Superintendent Lawrence Wyllie of **Lincoln-Way CHSD 210**, New Lenox, told the *Chicago Tribune* on Aug. 12.

The district cut 35 teaching positions this spring via layoffs, retirements and resignations. No teachers have been rehired to date and Wyllie said scheduling is all finished for the spring.

Teachers organizations said they expected half of the laid off teachers to be called back this spring in any case. With the federal jobs bill, however, Illinois Education Association President Ken Swanson said the number could climb.

**Knoxville District 202** Superintendent Stephen Wilder said he's anxious to learn about the criteria in spending that money, which could take some time. If the Illinois Gen-

eral Assembly must pass an appropriations bill for the money, he said, that means funds could come when the school year is well under way. And districts already have presented their tentative budgets, factoring in for less state aid than previous

years.

School finance experts said the bottom line is federal cash for school jobs will surely help some districts because school districts typically invest as much as 80 percent of their resources in personnel costs.

## School applicants await federal 'i3' grants as big nonprofit groups get nod

Two nonprofit education organizations in Illinois have been selected along with 47 other organizations nationwide from among nearly 1,700 applicants for potential first-round funding under the Investing in Innovation (i3) program. To receive these early grants, which will only go to the highest-rated applicants, the winners must have secured a commitment for a 20 percent private-sector match by Sept. 8.

A middle-grades reform project centered in Savoy called the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform, and a pre-K-Grade 3 Math project of the Erikson Institute in Chicago were selected. Each will receive up to \$5 million, provided that matching funds are found.

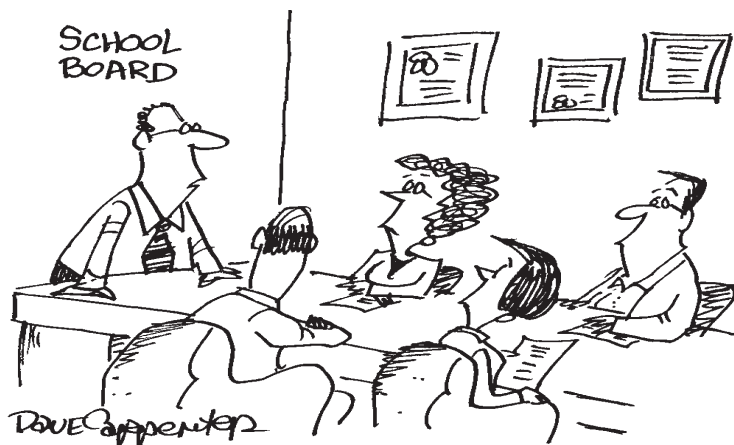
The National Forum proposes to develop and test a promising innovation aimed at improving persistently low-performing middle grades schools, and closing student achievement gaps. The Forum will develop and test the innovation with an existing consor-

tium of 18 urban and rural schools in three states: Illinois, North Carolina, and California.

The Erikson Institute proposed a five-year initiative to help **Chicago District 299** students reach or exceed state Learning Standards for Mathematics by designing and implementing an innovative professional development program for teachers who serve high-needs children in prekindergarten through third grade. The project includes a requirement for publishing training materials addressing the Illinois Learning Standards for Mathematics.

All i3 applicants, including many Illinois school districts, will receive their respective reviewers' comments and scores in the coming weeks, federal officials said. They may still be offered i3 program funding.

Comments and scores for all highest-rated applications will be posted on the i3 Website at <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/innovation/index.html>.



"Unfortunately, we're approaching the expiration dates on most of our quick-fix solutions."

# Pre-conference workshops promise varied learning

## Six full-day and two half-day meetings set

Registrants for the 2010 Joint Annual Conference can choose from among six full day or two half-day workshops scheduled for Friday, Nov. 19. These sessions require a fee (\$215 for full-day workshops; \$140 for half-day workshops) along with advance registration.

The full-day workshops will be held from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. Registration and continental breakfast will begin at 8 a.m. Continental breakfast, lunch, breaks and all materials are included in the full-day workshop registration fee.

The half-day morning workshop includes continental breakfast beginning at 8 a.m., and the workshop will run from 9 until 11:30 a.m. The half-day afternoon workshop includes lunch, beginning at 11:30 a.m., and the workshop will run from 12:30 until 3 p.m.

Several of the workshops will qualify participants for School Board LeaderShop “core credits,” and others will be offered as “electives.”

The full day workshops include: **School Board Leadership (core credit)**. Whether you’re a 10-year veteran or recently seated, a board member or a superintendent, this workshop will provide you with an opportunity to think and talk about the unique role of the school board and the important work it must do. Participants will have an opportunity to:

- Analyze the unique and important role and work of the school board;
- Learn to identify effective board policies and practices and those that are ineffective (and even destructive);
- Practice valuable interpersonal and decision-making skills.

Facilitators for the workshop are Steve Clark, Patrick Rice, and Debra Larson, from the Illinois Association of School Boards.

**The Board’s First Responsibility: Detecting and Communicating a Compelling Vision (core credit)**. Mission? Vision? Strategic plans? Goals? Effective school boards understand that their primary responsibility is to identify and clarify the district’s ends based on community values and aspirations. But where do they begin ... how do they proceed? Participants will have an opportunity to think about, discuss and practice:

- Detecting their community’s values around and aspirations for their public schools;
- Articulating a compelling, shared vision for their districts;
- Aligning the entire system – but especially the work of the board – to that vision.

Facilitators are Nesa Brauer and Jeff Cohn, from the Illinois Association of School Boards.

**Financial Oversight Essentials (core credit)**. School boards are responsible for the financial governance of the school districts. But how much does the average school board member know about internal controls, auditing procedures or financial statement analysis? Specifically, this workshop will explore:

- The board’s legal, ethical and governance responsibilities for sound financial policy and practices;
- Establishing clear expectations for the maintenance of “financial health;”
- The importance of internal controls to protect district assets; and
- The purpose and function of the school district audit.

Facilitators are Dean Langdon and Thomas F. Leahy, from the Illinois Association of School Boards, and Tim C. Custis, CPA, Principal with Gorenz & Associates, LTD, Peoria.

**Data First for School Governance (core credit)**. How will we know that we are making progress toward our student learning and district goals? How can

we communicate that progress simply and effectively to our public? How can we use data to ensure continuous improvement in our district? How can and should data inform our decision making? And how can data help us make better decisions and difficult choices in times of limited resources?

Facilitators are Angela Peifer, from the Illinois Association of School Boards, and Katheryn Gemberling, project director for the NSBA Gates Foundation grant to train school boards on data-driven decision making, examining teacher effectiveness and college readiness for all students.

**Comprehensive Workshop for Board Presidents (elective credit)** Being an effective board president requires special skills. Participants will learn the role of the president as it relates to the rest of the board and superintendent, the keys to effective meetings, parliamentary procedure, managing board conflict, communications, ethics and teamwork. This hands-on, interactive workshop will give you an opportunity to learn and compare notes with other board presidents from around the state.

Facilitators are Laurel DiPrima and Barbara B. Toney, of the Illinois Association of School Boards.

**Myers-Briggs Type Indicator – A Tool for School Board Excellence (elective credit)**. Countless board members and administrators have found Type MBTI to be an excellent resource for governance, organizational and personal excellence. This workshop will help you to:

- Enhance your board’s ability to make good decisions;
- Use your strengths and those of others on your board to develop consensus on issues;
- Communicate effectively with board, staff and community.
- Develop strategies toward effective meetings.

See **WORKSHOPS** on page 8

# Joint Annual Conference preview online to show schedule, describe all 115 panels

A preview booklet for the 2011 Joint Annual Conference available online at this time includes a master schedule of all major Conference events, descriptions and time slots for 115 panel sessions, descriptions of pre-conference workshops, and much more.

This year's event will be the 78<sup>th</sup> Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators and Illinois Association of School Business Officials in Chicago. This is an important event for Illinois school leaders, the nation's largest state education conference, presenting an unmatched opportunity to learn and share information among colleagues.

As mentioned, a total of 115 panel sessions will be offered over the course of the three-day conference. Included are numerous panels designed to help schools save money or boost revenue. Panels such as Dealing with Difficult Financial Times, Managing the Skyrocketing Costs of Group Health Insurance, Revenue Enhancement Opportunities, Saving Energy and Money within Tight Budgets, Passing a Referendum During Severe Economic Times, and The Ten Best Practices in School District Finance all speak to these concerns.

Expert school finance guidance will be provided at several of the workshops from panels of individuals with extensive experience in Illinois school finance and investment. For example, the session on The Ten Best Practices in School District Finance will feature tips on debt issuance, including referendum planning strategies, long-range financial planning, and managing cash flow and investments to maximize interest income.

The conference will also include eight pre-conference workshops, a tour of Chicago Public Schools, Carousel of Panels, professional development activities for board and district secretaries, coffee and conversation sessions, three inspiring general-session speakers, annual Delegate Assembly, bookstore, and much more.

Early registration fee is \$350, and will go to \$375 for those who register after Sep. 17. Registrations received in the IASB office or postmarked after Sep. 17 will not be mailed to the district, but rather will be taken to the conference to be processed. Registrants will need to go to the registration bay for late registrations.

Conference registration packets and badges will be mailed on Nov. 5

See **PREVIEW** on page 8

## Deadline draws near to nominate board secretary for 2010 'Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award'

The deadline for submitting documents nominating board secretaries for IASB's Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award is Oct. 1.

Districts are encouraged to nominate local district employees (superintendent's secretary, superintendent's administrative assistant, school board secretary, etc.) who do the work of the school board secretary for this honor.

The award was created as a trib-

ute to the memory of Holly Jack, a long-time IASB employee who was instrumental in promoting and developing the secretaries' program at the annual conference. It will be presented at the IASB/IASA/IASBO annual conference in Chicago.

For more information, visit the IASB website, <https://www.iasb.com/jac10/hollyjack.cfm>, or contact Anna Lovern at 217/528-9688, ext. 1125, or at [alovern@iasb.com](mailto:alovern@iasb.com).

## NEWS FROM IASB

### Members-Only site offers survey on hot board issues

Did you know IASB's Members-Only website includes an interactive feature of general survey questions about current issues in education? It's a place where you can "vote" on the topics and compare your responses to those of other board members. To access this feature, log onto the Members-Only website at: <http://members.iasb.com>.

Registration is required. This requires the member's seven-digit Member ID number and last name. The number appears on the mailing label of all materials sent to IASB members, and begins with "2." After completing this step, members need to set up an account with an email address and a chosen password.

### Annual School Calendar now posted on website

IASB's Annual School Calendar of legal dates and deadlines for 2010-2011 is now available on the IASB website, and includes a PDF version that is easily downloaded.

IASB makes the Annual School Calendar available in order to help districts prepare their local school calendars. Dates listed comply with all statutory deadlines contained in the Election Code, School Code and selected acts of the state legislature. It does not contain dates imposed by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) or its regulations.

The school calendar is posted online so that it is available more quickly and to allow for revisions to reflect any new legislation enacted, and for the correction of any errors.

Subscribers to IASB's Online Update will be notified when any revisions are made.

To learn more, visit: <https://www.iasb.com/law/> and click on "2010-11 Annual School Calendar."

**WORKSHOPS** *from page 6*

Facilitators are John Cassel and Larry Dirks, of the Illinois Association of School Boards.

The half-day workshops include:

**The Board and its Superintendent: Developing and Maintaining an Effective Relationship (core credit).** An effective school board works to develop and maintain a productive relationship with the superintendent – a relationship consisting of mutual respect and a clear understanding of respective roles and expectations. Attend this workshop to learn how to engage in a deliberate process that benefits your board, superintendent and district.

Participants in this workshop will:

- Understand the complementary roles and responsibilities of the board and the superintendent;
- Discuss how school board and superintendent teams can develop and maintain productive relationships;
- Discover the role trust plays in developing an effective leadership team;
- Learn four principles of trust and how to incorporate them into your board room.

Facilitators are Donna Johnson and Sandra Kwasa, of the Illinois Association of School Boards.

**Transform Difficult People into 21<sup>st</sup> Century Leaders (elective credit).** Dysfunctional relationships can paralyze your board. Explore the behavior styles that cause conflict in groups and learn how to resolve it. This interactive workshop involves learning from both theoretical and practical perspectives. You will take away practical skills about leadership that counts in the 21st Century.

Facilitator is Greg McKenzie, President and Founder of Window to Leadership.

More information and registration materials including detailed workshop descriptions are being mailed to board members and superintendents.

Online registration will be available. All workshops will be held on Friday, Nov. 19, at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers.

## Division meetings' financial sponsorship program provides support for fall training

This year's round of Illinois Association of School Boards' fall division dinner meetings is sponsored by the following organizations:

- First Midstate, Inc. – Silver Level Sponsor
- Legat Architects, Inc. – Bronze Level Sponsor
- Wight & Company – Bronze Level Sponsor
- Kings Financial Consulting, Inc. – Bronze Level Sponsor

This new sponsorship program provides opportunities for individu-

als and organizations to provide financial sponsorship to support and enhance all of the division meetings program purposes: board member professional development, networking, peer recognition, association governance and learning about resources available from IASB.

For more information about sponsorship opportunities, please contact any IASB field services director or Cathy A. Talbert, Associate Executive Director, Field Services and Policy Services, at 217/528-9688 or 630-629-3776, ext. 1234 or [ctalbert@iasb.com](mailto:ctalbert@iasb.com).

## Upcoming meetings a chance for training, networking, learning key resources, more

**W**ant to learn more about current legal issues impacting school boards or some other special topic or issue of central importance to school leaders? Want to find out what other school boards in your area are doing, and meet your IASB division leaders?

You can do all of this and more by attending one or more of this year's fall division dinner meetings. These IASB division events are close by, reasonably priced, and well worth your time.

Beginning on Sep. 9, and concluding Nov. 4, IASB's fall division dinner meetings are a great place to catch up on school leadership developments, and share ideas and solutions with fellow school leaders and your IASB leadership. The complete schedule is available at IASB's online Events Calendar, 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.

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for all registrations received prior to the Sep. 17 registration deadline.

In an effort to reduce mailing costs, badge holders and ribbons will not be mailed; they must instead be picked up onsite at the 2010 conference. Badges holders can be picked up merely by going to one of the following four locations and showing the attendant a conference badge:

- IASB registration desk at the Hyatt, Grand Ballroom Foyer
- IASB information desk and work-

shop registration area at the Sheraton, Ballroom Foyer, 2<sup>nd</sup> level

- Illinois ASBO workshop registration desk, 2nd floor foyer in the Swissotel (for IASBO workshop participants only)
- School Board/District Secretary Program, ballroom level, Swissotel (for program participants only).

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



# NEWS HEADLINES

**Charleston** (July 14, *The Associated Press*) Charleston school board members are talking about searching for corporate sponsors to help keep school sports alive. Most immediately, the school district is looking for a corporate sponsor to keep its annual high school girls basketball tournament afloat. But more long-term, officials say, is the concern that the state government's financial crisis will force them to look for outside money for all sports.

**Chicago** (Aug. 9, *Chicago Sun-Times*) The release of a district budget that officials say is finally "balanced," as required by law, comes as nearly 100,000 Chicago students began classes on Aug. 2 at nearly 200 year-round schools. That included 10 year-round high schools that are among the first in District 299 to experience long-threatened larger high school class sizes — of roughly 33 kids—in a \$30 million budget-saving move. Most of the system's 310,000 other students started classes Sept. 7. An estimated 2,007 teachers, academic coaches and other school workers were trimmed out of the new budget.

**Danville** (Aug. 11, *Champaign News-Gazette*) The Danville school board has approved a pilot program of Saturday morning detentions for misbehaving students. "What we're doing is putting in place another step in the expectation-and-consequence sequence," said Principal Mark Neil, who proposed the program. The Saturday detention will be used to address unexcused absences, tardies, loitering and excessive cell phone violations. It will not be used for fighting or substance abuse. Students will be required to do homework or read an approved book during detention. This is expected to help reduce the number of suspensions for nonviolent offenses and to keep the students in the educational setting without interruption during the school week.

**Lockport** (July 21, *Southtown Star*) Lockport Township High School District 205 is freezing administrative salaries for this school year. The District 205 board voted 6-0 on July 19 to freeze all salaries for the administration and non-union supervisors and directors as part of a cost-saving measure. The board has been trying to reduce its fiscal 2010-11 budget by more than \$760,000 to make up for the delays and reductions in state payments and to provide a small financial cushion. Supt. Garry Raymond said the district is doing better than it projected at cutting spending and should see budget cuts of about \$800,000. Next year the district will receive about \$650,000 less from the state, which is about four months behind in its payments. Freezing administrative salaries, which affects about 20 people, was one of the sacrifices the district needed to make, Raymond said.

**Machesney Park** (Aug. 5, *Rockford Register Star*) The Harlem CSD 122 school board and district school teachers have agreed on contract terms and classroom changes. Teachers agreed to a two-year freeze of their base salaries and will earn a 3.5 percent base salary raise in the third year of the contract. They still can earn more pay on 18 steps for years of service, longevity and nine levels of advanced education.

**Ottawa** (July 21, *The Times*) Ottawa Elementary District 141 is hoping to curb the number of school bus-related accidents. During the board meeting on July 20, the board heard first reading on a policy addressing procedures for handling accidents involving school bus personnel on duty. Superintendent Craig Doster said the new policy came about following several accidents in the prior school year. Under the new procedure, if a driver is involved in an accident with a school vehicle and

is deemed at fault, a review process will follow to discuss what happened. The policy also includes three steps: warning, probation and termination.

**Peoria** (July 26, *Journal Star*) The school board of Peoria District 150 approved a new, more consistent dress code policy for high school students on Aug. 9. While it's new that returning high school students will be required to pen their name under the district's dress code expectations, school officials said Monday little in the policy itself is new. "Most of what you see here, has been our dress code all along ... what we're going to look at when this is passed is enforcement and how to make it a customary kind of thing," board member Martha Ross said. Ross added that the new dress code policy "marries" and replaces the different dress code policies at the various high schools into one that will be followed by all. Essentially the dress code spells out what students can and cannot wear. Examples include no visible underwear, no cleavage, or any thong sandals or flip flops.

**Statewide** (Aug. 9, *Chicago Tribune*) Nontraditional teaching jobs are awash in applicants. Charter schools, which are publicly financed and independently run, have seen a surge of applications in some of the state's most impoverished communities. In 2009, the Illinois Network of Charter Schools had 400 attendees at its job fair. Last spring, the number swelled to 850 — and another couple of hundred were turned away, said Andrew Broy, the group's director. Teaching abroad is also a booming trend. In May, resumes swelled by 150 percent compared with 2009, reports Teach Away Inc. The firm recruits teachers for jobs in about a dozen countries, many offering tax-free salaries, subsidized housing and plane tickets. Business is also booming in the Peace Corps.

# Disregarding constitutional rights puts school officials at risk



Brian Zumpf served as an extern in IASB's Office of General Counsel this summer.

## DEVELOPMENTS IN SCHOOL LAW

Qualified immunity provides government officials with protection from personal liability for civil damages as a result of their performance of discretionary functions. However, this does not give officials free reign to engage in lawless conduct. The protection provided by qualified immunity can be lost in circumstances where an official's conduct is in violation of a constitutional right, and the right was clearly established, such that a reasonable person would have known of it. A recent case from Texas demonstrates how school official's lack of knowledge or knowing disregard for students' constitutional rights can result in the loss of qualified immunity. Though this case does not set binding precedent for Illinois, its universal message is applicable in all cases involving qualified immunity.

*Morgan v. Swanson*, 2010 WL 2598393 (5th Cir. 2010) began when the parents of elementary school students from two schools (both from the Plano Independent School District) brought suit under section 1983 of the Civil Rights Act against their respective principals for religious viewpoint discrimination. The parents alleged the principals practiced viewpoint discrimination by not allowing students to distribute religious messages or gifts in the schools.

According to the parents' allegations, one of the principals had on a number of occasions confiscated items with religious messages that were contained in the "goodie bags" handed out by students to their classmates during the school's "winter break" party. In 2001, the item at issue was a pencil with the phrase "Jesus is the

reason for the season" written on it. In 2003, the item at issue was a laminated card entitled the "Legend of the Candy Cane" explaining the Christian origin of the candy cane.

The other principal had allegedly confiscated free tickets to a Christian drama a student had handed out at school. It was also alleged that a student's mother tried unsuccessfully to meet with the principal in order to discuss the snacks and gifts that were going to be handed out during her daughter's school birthday party. One such item was a pencil with the phrase "Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so" written on it. When the parent arrived at the school with the items, she was handed a letter accusing her of distributing material to students on school property and threatening her with arrest. The principal later confiscated the religious materials from the student when she attempted to hand them out to her classmates on the sidewalk and lawn outside the school.

The circuit court (court of appeals) was legally required to accept the parents' allegations as true because its sole purpose was to review the principals' claim that due to the principals' qualified immunity, the parents had failed to state a legal claim upon which the court could rule. The district court (trial court) had previously denied the principals' attempt to dismiss the case based upon the same claim. In order to rule on the principals' motion to dismiss, the court needed only to determine "whether it was clearly established at the time of the alleged misconduct that elementary school students have a First Amendment right to be free from religious viewpoint discrimination while at school."

The court found "overwhelming precedent and persuasive authority to the contrary" of the principals' contention that the First Amendment's

Free Speech Clause did not extend to distribution of non-curricular materials in public elementary schools. The court quickly dismissed this contention and quoted the well-known *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, 393 U.S. 503 (1969) decision's statement that students do not "shed their constitutional right to freedom of speech or expression at the schoolhouse gate." *Tinker* is a landmark case that decided schools cannot prohibit student expressions of opinion unless they would "materially and substantially" interfere with school operations. The court found that the Supreme Court, the Fifth Circuit, the United States Government, and the principals' own Plano Independent School District had notified the principals that elementary school students have First Amendment rights. It concluded the principals had "fair warning that suppression of student-to-student distribution of literature on the basis of religious viewpoint is unlawful under the First Amendment with respect to elementary school students." Since the principals were not entitled to qualified immunity, the court affirmed the district court's denial of the principals' motion to dismiss.

*Morgan* serves as a fresh reminder to school officials of the consequences of conducting themselves in a manner that clearly violates students' constitutional rights. School officials who take action without considering students' rights can put their district and themselves in a precarious legal position. The preservation of students' rights begins with a school official's personal knowledge of the law and clearly defined school district policy. If school officials encounter a students' rights issue that is outside of their knowledge or undefined by school district policy, they should not hesitate to consult the school attorney prior to taking any action.

# Bill signed to offer relief from unfunded state mandates

Gov. Pat Quinn signed legislation on Aug. 20 to provide relief to school districts from new unfunded state mandates.

HB 4711 (Eddy, R-Hutsonville) states that no school district is obligated to comply with any future mandate that is added to the Illinois School Code unless a separate appropriation has also been enacted that provides full funding for the mandate for the school year in which the mandate is required.

The bill also applies to any state regulation containing a new mandate added entirely by the Illinois State Board of Education. Before discontinuing or modifying a new mandate, however, the school district must petition its regional superintendent of schools for approval.

If approved by the regional superintendent, the district may choose to discontinue or modify the mandated activity to ensure that the costs of compliance do not exceed the funding received. The bill is now Public Act 96-1441, effective Aug. 20, 2010.

Acting on other school-related legislation, Gov. Quinn has signed into law several Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance “hot bills,” including:

- HB 4879 (Eddy, R-Hutsonville) to

include the number of pupils enrolled in early education programs in a school district’s transportation reimbursement. The bill is now **Public Act 96-1264**, effective Jan. 1, 2011.

- HB 5120 (Rose, R-Mahomet) to clarify that a school bus must contain either an operating two-way radio or a cellular radio device while the school bus driver is in possession of a school bus. The bill is now **Public Act 96-1066**, effective July 16, 2010.
- HB 5838 (Burke, D-Chicago), regarding the requirement for automated external defibrillators (AED) at outdoor physical fitness facilities, the bill deletes the provision which requires that if there is no building available near the outdoor facility, the person responsible for supervising the activity must ensure the availability of an AED. The bill is now **Public Act 96-1268**, effective Jan. 1, 2011.
- HB 6041 (Eddy) allows school districts to increase, abate, maintain, abolish, and re-create working cash funds and provides that moneys in the working cash fund may be used by the school board for any and all school purposes. The bill is now **Public Act 96-1277**, effective July 26, 2010.

- SB 3117 (Garrett, D-Lake Forest) extends the time period for allowing interfund transfers by three years (from June 30, 2010 to June 30, 2013). It allows a district to transfer funds among the education fund, operations and maintenance fund, and transportation fund. The bill is now **Public Act 96-1201**, effective July 22, 2010.
- SB 3635 (Noland, D-Elgin), in the provisions concerning the account of expenditures for programs in transitional bilingual education, the bill provides that at least 60% of bilingual funding must be used for instructional costs. The bill is now **Public Act 96-1170**, effective Jan. 1, 2011.
- SB 3638 (Link, D-Vernon Hills) provides for the creation (through the Department of Revenue) of Taxpayer Action Boards in Cook, DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties to promote “sunshine in assessments” and transparency reforms. It also extends the alternative general homestead exemption for three years.

For a detailed summary of recent legislation, refer to the Alliance “Digest of Bills Passed 2010” on the IASB Web site at: <http://www.iasb.com/govrel/digest2010.pdf>.

## Election law change puts damper on planned merger

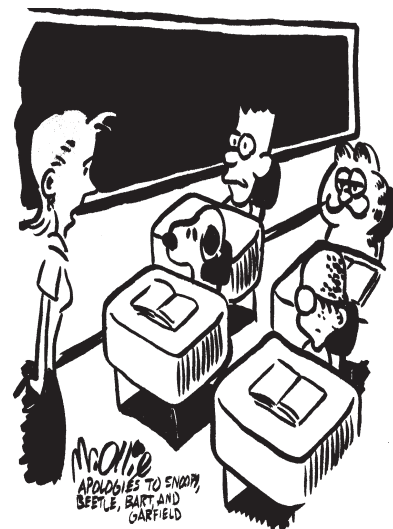
The public may have to wait longer than expected to vote on a merger between three rural school districts, because a change in state election laws could affect the Committee of 10’s timeline to get the proposal on the April 2011 ballot.

At a meeting on July 22 in Abingdon, committee chairman Jerry Arthur said the State Board of Elections has changed the schedule for submitting information, but the information has not been officially published yet. He asked the committee, made up of community members in the Abingdon, Avon and Bushnell-Prairie City school

districts, to consider either making the new deadlines or waiting for the November 2011 ballot.

The old election law called for the committee to submit the proposed tax rate, board of education election procedures and bond sales plans for a three-way consolidation between the districts, among other items, to the State Board of Elections by early October.

Arthur said that deadline will most likely be earlier. “Are we looking at April, or are we looking at moving it back and doing a more thorough job?” Arthur said.



“This wasn’t the kind of ‘character education’ I had in mind.”

## Field services survey aims to assure high quality programs are provided at low cost

Within the next few weeks board members and superintendents in IASB member school districts will receive an email invitation to respond to a survey. This survey is designed to provide association staff with the information needed to assure that the association provides high quality, cost effective services of value to its members.

That is, IASB Field Services is seeking member feedback as part of its continuous improvement efforts. The Field Services department is responsible for IASB division meetings, as well as in-district workshops for board and superintendent teams.

The association will be awarding a free in-district workshop to one board and superintendent team in each of IASB's 21 divisions as a "thank you" for participation in the survey. The workshop can be selected from a list of the association's regularly offered workshops, may be up to four hours in length, and is valued at \$600.

For a district to be entered into the drawing, the superintendent and at least four members of a board must complete and submit the survey. Winning districts will be announced in the Comiskey Room of the Hyatt Regency Chicago at the Joint Annual Conference in November.

### **ELECTION** *from page 1*

<https://www.iasb.com/elections/>.

That material and other announcements related to the 2011 school board elections have recently been mailed to all IASB member school districts. Included is a letter from IASB, as well as information pertaining to accepting or rejecting nominating petitions, school board election calendar, checklist of election duties of the board secretary, sample news release, list of sample election forms, sample letter to prospective candidates, registration form for district secretary election workshops,

and an order form to purchase candidates' kits.

The kit contains new and updated publications and materials about school board candidacy, including a job description, election tips, an abbreviated 2011 election calendar, a resource list, a pamphlet on effective board service, and IASB division meetings information.

Districts that also seek help in recruiting school board candidates can also find more information at: <http://www.iasb.com/training/recruiting.cfm>.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**October 1 – A District Secretary Workshop for the 2011 School Board Election**, Mt. Vernon SD 80

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

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

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

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

**October 7 – A District Secretary Workshop for the 2011 School Board Election**, Freedom Hall, Park Forest

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

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

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

**October 8 – A District Secretary Workshop for the 2011 School Board Election**, Marquardt SD 15, Glendale Heights

**October 13 – Lake Division Fall Dinner Meeting**, Lake Bluff ESD 65

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