

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

September 2014 / Issue No. 747



Leaders of the Illinois Association of School Boards showed their enthusiasm for the “StandUp4PublicSchools” campaign when the IASB board met on Aug. 23 in Bloomington.

Member districts urged to ‘StandUp’ for public schools via videotaped messages

IASB is launching a new initiative this month aimed at motivating and informing the public about the importance of quality education provided by local public schools.

Public education in Illinois and across the country is under attack, an attack led by state and federal law-

makers, corporate interests and education agencies, many of whom are putting strings on education funding as an incentive to change. Meanwhile, some corporations and their privately funded think tanks and philanthropic organizations are crusad-

See **STANDUP** on page 6

Poll: 56% of public want local school board to control what is taught in public schools

The 46th Annual PDK/Gallup Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward Public Schools shows that over half of Americans – 56 percent – say local school boards should have the greatest influence in deciding what is taught in the public schools.

“As the leading advocate for pub-

lic education, public support of the school board governance model is of upmost importance to the National School Boards Association,” said Thomas J. Gentzel, NSBA executive director.

“The findings show strong sup-

See **POLL** on page 6

Conference preview publication online listing panels, events

A preview document describing the 2014 Joint Annual Conference is now available online to help users “Make the Connection” to everything this event has to offer. Information includes a master schedule of all major Conference events, plus descriptions and time slots for panel sessions and pre-conference workshops.



This year’s event will be the 82nd Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators and Illinois Association of School Business Officials in Chicago.

There will be 113 panel sessions this year, with many designed to help districts save money, increase revenue or better monitor school finances. Speaking to these money concerns will be panels such as:

The Cost of Prevailing Wage: Illinois’ Prevailing Wage law has been around since 1941. How much does it truly cost school districts and is it still necessary? Panelists will discuss the current political climate on the issue and the changes proposed in recent years.

Suspending the Salary Schedule, Macomb-style: The 2013-2014 school

See **PREVIEW** on page 11

Burroughs nominations

The deadline to nominate school board presidents for the Thomas Lay Burroughs Award is Oct. 5. The award from the ISBE will be presented Sunday, Nov. 23, at the Joint Annual Conference. Last year's winner was Brenda Murphy, board president in **Community Consolidated School District 62**, Des Plaines. Nominations should be submitted to Katherine Galloway, via email at: kgallowa@isbe.net. Indicate Burroughs Nomination as the subject. For more information, including award, visit: http://www.isbe.net/board/pdf/burroughs_award.pdf.

ILEARN financial data

The Illinois Education Agency Retrieval Network (ILEARN) now includes school district financial data from FY 2013. It contains yearly financial, tax and per pupil data since 1997 and can be used for district financial comparisons, and studies comparing districts, etc. Questions on this may be directed to Toby Turek, Christine Kolaz or Debbie Hemberger in ISBE's School Business Services Division at (217) 785-8779 or finance1@isbe.net.

Immunization awareness

After two major mumps outbreaks recently in Illinois, the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), and public health officials are encouraging districts to ensure student immunizations are up to date. The IDPH has implemented a few changes. The hepatitis B vaccination requirement, for example has been adapted to apply to students entering sixth grade instead of fifth. Also, students must show proof of having received two doses each of the live rubella and mumps virus vaccines. For more on immunizations visit <http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/shots.htm>.

Illinois ACT scores among the best for states that test all their students

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) announced Aug. 20 that the graduating Class of 2014 achieved a composite ACT score of 20.7, giving Illinois the second highest score among the 12 states that test all graduates. The Illinois ACT composite was just below the national average of 21.0, based mainly on scores of self-selected college-bound students.

The majority of states only test students intending to go to college compared to Illinois and 11 other states, where every 11th grader is required to take the ACT as part of state student assessment requirements.

The percentage of Illinois students meeting all four of ACT's College and Career Readiness Benchmarks increased slightly, from 25 to 26 percent. The scores indicate a student's chance of obtaining a 'C' or higher in first-year college courses in English composition, algebra, biology, etc.

"Illinois has been and continues to be a leader in promoting college and career readiness and we're glad to see this increase in the percentage of students meeting important benchmarks," said State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch.

This year's ACT state report also includes scores from students allowed extended time to complete the test, a practice begun in 2013. Eligible students may request extended-time accommodations for the ACT, but before last year ACT did not include these students' scores in state composite scores.

Illinois' ACT score is based on 158,037 students tested in the class of 2014. That compares to 160,066 in 2013 and 146,822 in 2012.

Last year was the last time Illinois high school students will take the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), which included the ACT, although the state is still making the ACT available to districts this year.

Instead, a new college and career readiness test called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) will be giv-

en to high school students as well as third-through eighth-graders.



High school PARCC assessments are aligned to state standards in English language arts (ELA) and mathe-

See ACT on page 9

ISAT, Prairie State exam test scores available for review

The 2014 final results for the grades 3-8 Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT), grade 11 Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE), and grades 3-8 and 11 Illinois Alternate Assessment (IAA) are now available for district review on the state's Student Information System (SIS).

To view the Assessment Scores Detail report in SIS:

1. Login to SIS via IWAS.
2. Click the "Reports" link on the SIS Home Page.
3. Click the "Plus" Sign next to "Assessments" to expand the selection.

See SCORES on page 5

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**

Thirteen counties will vote on schools' sales tax plans

School districts in 13 counties (Calhoun, Carroll, Edwards, Greene, Jersey, Kankakee, Macoupin, Morgan, Moultrie, Piatt, Wayne, White, and Whiteside) will attempt to adopt a new County School Facilities Sales Tax this fall.

The Nov. 4 general election will mark the 11th time since the law was adopted in October 2007 that county voters will have had the chance to decide whether their local district can tap into this alternative funding source to improve school facilities.

The sales tax referendum, when adopted, imposes an additional sales tax of up to 1 percent on everything the county taxes, but it does not impose any tax on goods or services not already subject to sales taxes.

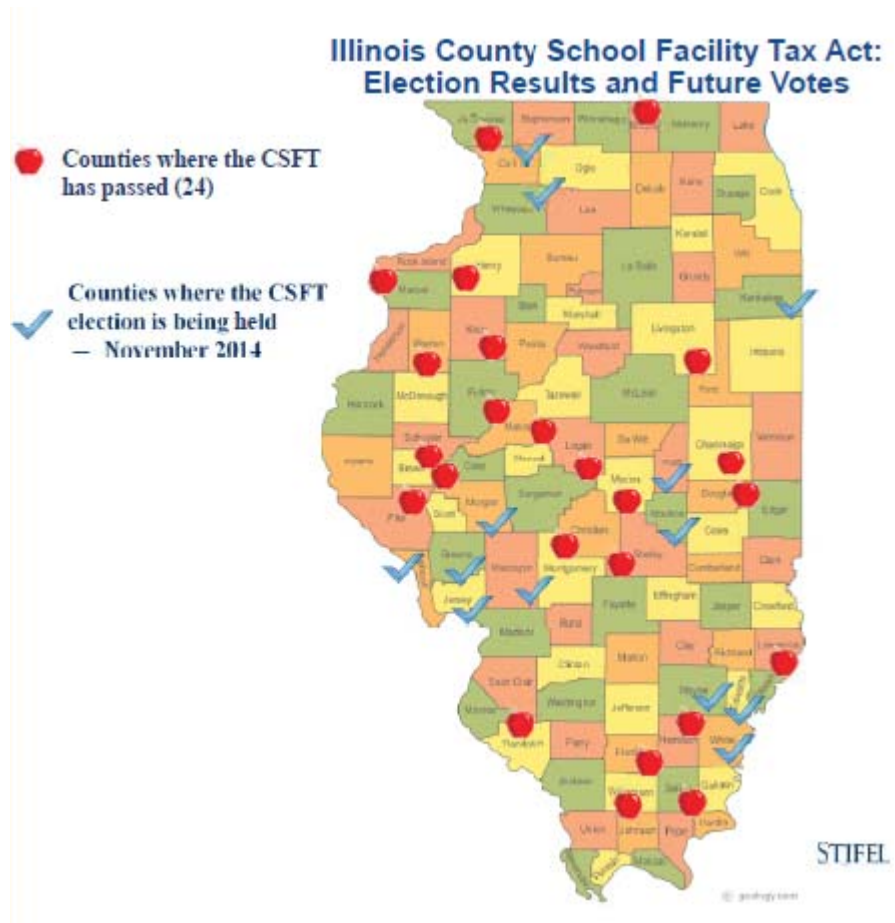
Goods and services that are not subject to the additional sales tax include cars, trucks, ATVs, boats and RVs; mobile homes, unprepared food, drugs, farm equipment and parts. The revenue produced can be significant, however.

School districts have three basic options to use the funds: to save for capital projects, to issue new bonds for current capital needs, or to retire existing debt by abating taxes or not levying property taxes for facilities. But districts can choose to use the funds in any combination of these three ways, and there is little red tape involved.

For many school districts, the funding provided by the county tax may be the best immediate hope to raise funds for needed construction, repair and maintenance.

But the school facilities sales tax proposition is not a sure thing. In fact, the tax has been approved by voters in 24 of 57 county referendums since 2007. The last election held in March 2014 saw only six of 16 sales tax referendums pass.

The referendum qualifies to be placed on the ballot when school boards representing more than 50 percent of the resident student



enrollment in a county adopt a resolution to certify the question.

But timing is important because it takes about a year for districts to receive any funds as the state revenue department only changes the tax rates for counties twice a year, on January 1 and July 1. It then takes about four months after the county tax goes into effect for funds to be distributed from the state through the regional office of education to local schools.

After approval by voters, the county sales tax revenue is distributed among school districts based on their student population percentage in the county where the tax is applied.

The Aug. 15 deadline has just passed for school boards to adopt a resolution with the Regional Office of Education for getting such questions

on the ballot for the November election. The next deadline for boards to adopt a resolution putting a binding public policy question on the ballot, in the primary on Feb. 24, 2015, is Dec. 8 [this deadline is set by state law at 10 ILCS 5/28-2(c)].

In addition to the sales tax issues, at least two school districts have placed tax or bond issues on the Nov. 4 ballot. Such issues are on the ballot in:

- **Quincy School District 307** (\$89 million bond issue to build five new elementary schools plus additions to Quincy High School), and
- **Champaign CUSD 4** (\$149 million tax issue)

Results of all November referendums intended for school purposes will be reported in a subsequent issue of this newsletter.

2014-2015 Annual School Calendar lists election deadlines

The 2015 consolidated general election is still nearly eight months away, but school board candidates are already gearing up for the biennial event.

Tuesday, Sep. 23 is the first official day prospective candidates may circulate nominating petitions for signatures for the April 7, 2015, school board election.

This will be the first year that local school districts will not be involved in the school board election process. Those duties have been moved from the school board secretary to the county clerk or county board of election commissioners, as required under a new state law that went into effect earlier this year.

Candidates seeking information and forms should be referred to the county office responsible for the elections or to the Illinois State Board of Elections. The latter maintains a website that includes the 2015 Candidates' Guide: <http://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/2015CanGuide.pdf>.

The following forms are needed from a candidate when filing:

- A Statement of Candidacy, signed and notarized;
- Nominating papers bearing the required number of signatures (each signature must have an address), and a notarized signature of the

petition circulator;

- A receipt from the county clerk showing that the candidate has filed a Statement of Economic Interests before the day for filing, but with the year (2014). Note: Incumbents only need to provide a copy of the receipt from their required May 1, 2014, filing, unless they filed electronically;
- Loyalty Oath (this is optional)

Board member nominating papers must be filed with the county board or election commissioners, as the case may be, of the county in which the principal office of the school district is located. [105 ILCS 5/9-10]

- Monday, Dec. 15, is the first day that candidates may file these papers. Monday, Dec. 22, is the last day candidates may file. (Filings must be made not more than 113 or less than 106 days prior to the consolidated election.)
- Tuesday, Dec. 30, 2014: Last day for candidates who have filed for two incompatible offices to withdraw from all but one of the offices with the local election official or election authority. (10 ILCS 5/10-7).
- Wednesday, Dec. 31, 2014. Last day lottery shall be conducted by the local election official when two (2) or more petitions are received

simultaneously for the same office by more than one school board candidate.

- Thursday, Jan. 29, 2015. Last day for local election official to certify candidates and the offices they are filing for to the election authority for the April 7, 2015, school board election (10 ILCS 5/10-15). This is also the last day candidates may file notarized papers withdrawing their nomination in the office of the local election official (10 ILCS 5/10-7).
- Thursday, Feb. 5, 2015. Last day a person may file a notarized Declaration of Intent to be a write-in candidate with the proper election authority or authorities (appropriate county clerk(s) and/or boards of election commissioners. Write-in votes shall only be counted for person(s) who have filed a Declaration of Intent. Write-in declarations are NOT filed with the State Board of Elections. (10 ILCS 5/17-16.1; 65 ILCS 5/3.1-25-20).

After the election, the county election authority has until April 28, 2015, to canvass the votes and proclaim results. A complete abstract of votes will be transmitted to each local official and the State Board of Elections.

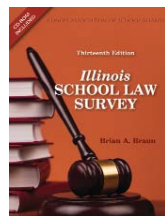
More information regarding deadlines for candidates is available from the Illinois State Board of Elections calendar, which is also available online at: <http://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/2015ElectionCalendar.pdf>.

IASB posted its Annual School Calendar of legal dates and deadlines for 2014-2015 online at the end of August. Staff members proof the calendar for accuracy with the Illinois State Board of Elections calendar. IASB's calendar includes a PDF version that can easily be downloaded at: http://www.iasb.com/pdf/cal_1415.pdf

IASB seeking tough new legal questions to answer and to add to next Law Survey

Do you have any tough legal questions that you just can't answer?

The Illinois School Law Survey is a layman's legal reference with more than 1,500 questions and answers in 27 chapters covering all areas of school law in Illinois. The lat-



est edition was published in 2014 and is available in the IASB bookstore, <http://www.iasb.com/shop/>.

Additional topics and questions for future editions are welcome. Author Brian Braun encourages anyone with a question not answered in the book to email their question to grglaub@iasb.com. IASB staff will see that every question is given full consideration and a prompt response.

Recent teachers' strike matches last year's walkout total

Although the 2013-14 school year produced fewer labor disagreements than the year before, the 2014-15 school year has already seen one teacher strike.

Teachers and paraprofessionals in **Galesburg CUSD 205** went on strike Aug. 13 and returned Aug. 29. The unit district in the IASB Western division, has an enrollment of 4,394 students. School was set to begin Aug. 13. The disagreement involved teacher pay, guidelines for teacher termination, and notification of classroom health issues, according to local television station KWQC's website.

Illinois experienced just one strike during the previous school year, a five-day work stoppage in December 2013 involving 39 teachers at **Mt. Olive SD 5** in the IASB Kaskaskia division.

Two more intent-to-strike notices have been reported this school year, according to the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board: **Highland CUSD 5** in the Southwestern division, filed on Aug. 6; and **Richmond Burton High School District 157** in the Kishwaukee division, filed on Aug. 15. The status of these notices was unknown at the time of publication.

One other school district, **Waukegan SD 60**, is still faced with an active intent-to-strike notice left over from last school year. The notice was filed on Feb. 27, 2014 and involves the contract for 1,238 district employees, including teachers, nurses and permanent substitute teachers. The district, located in the Lake division, has an enrollment of 16,000-plus students.

Meanwhile, teachers in **Belvidere CUSD 100** in the Kishwaukee division are reportedly working without a contract since the old one expired Aug. 15. No other action has been filed as of publication date.

Impasse and final offers, once reported, are posted on the state labor board's website at: <http://www2.illinois.gov/elrb/Pages/FinalOffers.aspx>.

Source: Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board.

Report calls for Chicago to do more to curb alleged epidemic of truancy

Among the recommendations released July 31 by a state task force on truancy and absenteeism in Chicago Public Schools were proposals to bring back school truancy officers; change how school districts report average daily attendance; upgrade data systems to better track absentee students; conduct aggressive outreach to parents, families, and communities; enact better support mechanisms for homeless and other at-risk students; and revise state laws and language on absenteeism.

The panel was organized by state lawmakers after a *Chicago Tribune* newspaper series, "An Empty-Desk Epidemic," raised concern.

The 150-page report said that the Chicago Public Schools' efforts to curb absenteeism fell short, and the consequences of failing to address the problem were dire for students.

According to the report:

Chronic absenteeism and truancy have consequences of untold proportions. Any student who is not in school is not learning. The kindergarten student who is not in school is acquiring a habit that will affect future school attendance. The junior high student who fails to show up is prey to the street gang that will give him what he will perceive to be a community of acceptance and the means to self-esteem. The street gang member will likely become a statistic in the criminal justice system. The young girl who is expected to care for her siblings instead of attending school will soon have her own children to care for...

The report contains diverse recommendations for prevention, early intervention, enhanced collection and

use of data, and outreach.

The task force recommends, for example, organizing a permanent commission on truancy and absenteeism concerns across the state and monitoring the progress on these concerns in Chicago Public Schools. It also recommends redefining absenteeism on the state level, and launching a permanent special commission to address concerns of special needs students.

It calls for the state, as well, to review the statutes on daily attendance, which currently ask the district to look at a student's three best months. The task force, however, recommends looking at a student's three best and three worst months of attendance, which might give a more accurate representation of the student's attendance during the year.

Among other recommendations for the Chicago Public Schools, but perhaps applicable elsewhere, were that the district should develop a major focus on data collection and dissemination.

The task force calls for accurate, easily disaggregated, and detailed data on attendance, which can be used to guide strategies for prevention and intervention. Data collection, the report said, should include barriers to attendance, students' disciplinary histories, demographics, and parents' involvement with the schools. The information should be available in a central database and, where possible, shared with parents.

The report is available online at: <http://www.isbe.net/TCPSTF/pdf/tcpstf-final-report.pdf>.

SCORES from page 2

4. Click on "Detail" for "Assessment Scores (Scale Score and Performance Level Only)" Detail report. (Note: This report will display PSAE Reading, Mathematics and Science scores. To view the PSAE Writing scores, select "Assessment Subscores (Detailed Scores by Subject Area)" and select "Writing.")
5. Select "All" for all tests and click

"Next."

6. Select desired report criteria, using "Sort By" (click the dropdown arrow and select a sort criteria if desired).
7. Click "Create PDF Report" to display report.

Technical assistance is available online or by calling 217/558-3600 during weekday business hours.

STANDUP *from page 1*

ing for more “education reforms” even as they are raising the stakes in student performance on mandated tests.

What could be the cause of all this? Money, according to Mark Naison, a professor at Fordham University, who says “there are huge profits to be made in the testing industry, in educational technologies that replace classroom teaching, and in the construction and management of charter schools.”

As the recent IASB guidebook to community engagement, “Connecting with the Community,” points out: “many board members and the general public may not understand how these attacks threaten the very existence of public education and local school governance.”

“StandUp4PublicSchools” is an opportunity to counter the misinformation and myths to focus on the important role public schools play in providing a pathway toward achievement and success for every child, according to IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy.

“We have been on the defensive far too long,” said Eddy, who himself is a former superintendent, principal, teacher, and coach. “It’s time that we tell our side of the story and enlist others to tell their reasons why they support public schools.”

To assist member districts, IASB will be providing materials and resources to help them spread the word and to create local activities to support the initiative. Information will be on the Association website at:

<http://www.iasb.com/standup/>. In addition, IASB will use its social media network on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter to distribute information and share videos, photos and other activities in member districts.

To find IASB on Facebook, members should search for the Illinois Association of School Boards and “like” the IASB page. Because this is a “closed” page, IASB will limit sharing and comments to member districts.

The initiative can also be found on Twitter by searching and following @ILschoolboards.

Local districts are encouraged to document and share their local activities. One way is by videotaping messages in and outside the school, said James Russell, IASB associate executive director. “Just as we did last year for the Centennial, we are asking districts to record and share these messages. It was a great success and we know many had fun with it.”

The messages do not have to be long nor do the videos require extensive production. “Essentially, we would like local districts to ask anyone, including celebrities, board members, etc., the question: ‘Why do you stand up for public schools?’” Russell said. In addition to sharing the messages on its social media sites, IASB will also feature them at the Joint Annual Conference in November.



‘StandUp’ also theme for 2014 ‘School Board Members day’

Nov. 15, 2014 will mark the sixth year of “School Board Members Day” observance in Illinois. The annual statewide day of recognition was created in 2008 when the General Assembly designated Nov. 15 to recognize the dedicated community service school board members provide.

As it has in past years, IASB is preparing materials to help districts and communities honor and thank their school board members. This material will include the official logo, sample press release, marquee and PSA messages, as well as an honorary certificate that can be personalized and presented to board members at a board meeting or recognition ceremony.

The materials will be available for download on Sep. 15 at the IASB members-only website, <https://members.iasb.com/resources.cfm>.

The 2014 School Board Members Day theme will capitalize on the Association’s newest initiative, “StandUp4PublicSchools.” The importance of school board members and local governance to the success of the public education system cannot be separated. Standing up for public schools means that the public stands up for school board service. The intent of this year’s School Board Members Day theme is to honor both.

POLL *from page 1*

port for local public schools and school board governance,” said Gentzel.

The poll, released on Aug. 20, states that the majority of Americans favor local over federal control, with more than half saying local school boards should have the greatest influence in deciding what is taught in the public schools. Alternately, the poll shows that the percentage of



Thomas Gentzel

Americans who say the federal government should have the greatest influence decreased, from 20 percent in 2007 to 15 percent in 2014.

“This poll again demonstrates beyond doubt that there is overwhelming public support for local control of public schools,” said Roger Eddy, IASB executive director. “It indicates vouchers are not sup-



Roger Eddy

ported, and it shows the public opposes the over-reliance on high stakes assessment as a primary indicator of a school’s effectiveness. These findings support the move toward multiple measures for accountability,” said Eddy.

For more details on the poll, which includes Americans’ knowledge and opinions of the Common Core State Standards, student assessment using standardized tests, and charters and vouchers, visit <http://www.pdkpoll.org>.

Fisher and Pritzker again nominated as IASB's top officers for Nov. 22 vote

The IASB Delegate Assembly will elect Association officers at the Joint Annual Conference in Chicago. IASB's nominating committee has endorsed Karen Fisher, **Ottawa THSD 140**, as president and Phil Pritzker, **Wheeling CCSD 21**, as vice president.

Fisher, who has served on her local school board since 1979, is seeking her second term as Association president. She represented the Starved Rock division on the Association board of directors from 2007 to 2012. She served on the executive committee in 2009 and 2010, the nominating committee in 2008, and the audit committee in 2009 and 2010. She also served as an alternate delegate to the NSBA Delegate Assembly in 2009 and 2010. She chaired the Resolutions Committee in 2011 and 2012 and she is completing her second year as vice president of the Association.

Pritzker has represented the North Cook Division on the Association board of directors since 2009. He served pre-



Karen Fisher



Phil Pritzker

viously served as division chairman and has recently served on the Association's executive committee. Pritzker began his local school board service in 1989.

The nominating committee, which met in late August to interview candidates, is chaired by immediate past president Carolyn Brooks and includes directors Roger Pfister, Rob Luttrell, Lisa Weitzel, and David Barton. John Metzger and Frank Mott serve as alternates.

The Association leaders elected by school board delegates will assume office at the close of the annual meeting of IASB's Delegate Assembly on Nov. 22.

Board approves new vision/mission wording to clarify purpose, agrees to conference plan

The IASB Board of Directors at its Aug. 23 meeting approved a new vision/mission statement for the Association.

Work on the language began several months ago as part of a continuing policy review of Association governance, expectations and indicators. The new statement elaborates

on what IASB's vision is and how it expects to accomplish it. Here is the new language:

"The vision of the Illinois Association of School Boards is excellence in local school board governance supporting quality public education."

See **MEETING** on page 9

Burroughs Award winner Somogyi returns to Board of Directors to fill out vacant term

IASB's North Cook Division has a familiar name and face returning as director. Barbara Somogyi, of **CCSD 59**, Arlington Heights, has been chosen to replace Eric Leys,



Barbara Somogyi

of **Maine Township High School District 207**, who resigned in July to move to California.

Somogyi previously served on the IASB Board of Directors from 1994 to 2009. She has served as a member of the CCSD 59 Board of Education for 37 years.

NEWS FROM IASB

Conference deadlines

The following list of dates represent key deadlines ahead for the 2014 Joint Annual Conference. More information about the deadlines listed below can be found on the conference web page at: <http://www.iasb.com/jac14/>.

Sep. 29 – Nominations due for the Holly Jack Outstanding Service award

Oct. 1 – Exhibitors to be included in Conference program

Oct. 23 – Advance registration at \$405 per person rate

Oct. 23 – Written refund requests, minus \$75 per person fee

Oct. 31 – Individual badge requests for registered exhibitors

Consolidation impact

The end of Fiscal Year 2014 saw a number of changes in IASB membership due to consolidations and annexations, bringing the count of member districts to 847, with eight non-member districts numbered among the 855 Illinois school districts.

Changes in membership last school year included:

- Formation of **Milford Area Public SD 124** (new) from a consolidation of the Milford high school district and the Milford elementary district in IASB's Corn Belt division;
- The annexation of the Cherry SD (dissolved) by **Dimmick CCSD 175** in the association's Starved Rock division;
- The annexation of West Richland school district (dissolved) by **East Richland CUSD 1** in the Wabash Valley; and
- The annexation of the Atwood Hammond school district (dissolved) by **Arthur CUSD 305** in IASB's Illini division.

Association extends warm welcome to new superintendents

On August 13, the Field Services department once again sponsored IASB's annual New Superintendent Luncheon at the association's office in Lombard. Superintendents who are either new to the position or new to Illinois were invited to attend.

The association did not host a luncheon this year in IASB's Springfield office due to the widely scattered distribution of new superintendents in those divisions. New superintendents in divisions that are served from

IASB's Springfield office will be individually contacted by their field services director.

The luncheon provided opportunities to:

- Review IASB's Foundational Principles of Effective Governance to familiarize superintendents with the governance concepts the staff shares with boards;
- Review some of the products and services that IASB offers that contribute to effective board governance, such as policy development

and updating, in-district work, including board self-evaluations and goal setting, and professional development opportunities, such as division meetings and the Joint Annual Conference;

- Share the perspective of a third-year superintendent about how IASB helped in that superintendent's transition with a new school board in the first and second year; and
- Network among superintendents and with IASB staff.

School board secretary training program planned for 2014 Joint Annual Conference

District/board secretaries are being encouraged to join with their peers from other school districts around the state for two days of specialized training opportunities at the Joint Annual Conference.

Paid registration to the Conference will entitle a district/board secretary to attend the secretaries' programming, to be held Nov. 21 and 22 at the Swissotel Chicago. There is no extra fee for these events.

The program will open Friday at 9 a.m. with an overview of what is new

and the presentation of the Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award. The group will hear a keynote address before breaking for lunch at noon.

Four breakout sessions will be held at 1:30 p.m. covering the following topics: Kick-Start Creating Your Procedures; Illinois Sunshine Laws (FOIA and OMA); Hats Off to Great Secretaries; and School Finance 101.

More news on the secretaries' programs is now available in the Conference Preview, posted at iasb.mys1cloud.com/conferencepreview2014.pdf.

Experienced editor, communicator joins IASB in Springfield

Theresa Kelly Gengen of Rochester has joined the IASB staff in Springfield as

a director of editorial services. She will serve as editor of The Illinois School Board Journal. She succeeds retired Journal editor Linda Dawson, a 13-year veteran with the Association.



Theresa Kelly Gengen

Prior to joining IASB, Gengen worked for the Diocese of Springfield in Illinois, where she developed special publications and worked on the Catholic Times bi-weekly newspaper. Her communications background also includes non-profit work and several years in college athletics administration.

IASB selected to pilot helpful new online tool for strengthening community engagement

IASB has been selected by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) to pilot a new online community engagement tool as a part of NSBA National Connection.

Offered by the National School Boards Association (NSBA), the National Connection program provides nationally developed tools and resources for school boards. This program recently replaced the former NSBA National Affiliate Program.

NSBA has partnered with the engagement technology company MindMixer (www.mindmixer.com) to bring participating districts a tool to provide school boards and districts with an opportunity to strengthen relation-

ships with their communities.

"One key element of community engagement is listening to all of the voices in your community," said Cathy Talbert, IASB associate executive director, field services and policy services. Using online tools such as MindMixer, a district can interact with a broader community than ever before and build an ongoing conversation with engaged community members over time, she said.

NSBA National Connection districts will be receiving more information from NSBA via email. For more information about National Connection, visit <http://www.nsba.org/services/national-connection>.



"The only way to create a sensation as an essayist these days is to write something mean about cats."

Elgin district superintendent José Torres tapped to head state math, science school

José M. Torres, district superintendent for the past six years at School District U-46, Elgin, was recently selected as the next president of the Illinois Math & Science Academy (IMSA).

Before becoming district superintendent in Elgin, Torres had previously served as a Regional Superintendent/Area Instruction Officer in Chicago Public Schools, and on the Federal Equity and Excellence Commission of the United States Department of Education.

“Our board was impressed by his intellectual curiosity, commitment to excellence and equity, entrepreneurial mindset, candor and authenticity, said IMSA Board Chair Sheila Griffin.

Torres will become the fourth president of IMSA, a residential math and science school for academically talented Illinois students.

The appointment means Torres also will be joining the Joint Education Leadership Committee (JELC) as well as the P-20 Council as an ex-officio member.

ACT from page 2

maths. High school students will take tests aligned to standards in ELA III, Algebra II or Integrated Math III this school year. The tests are designed to measure college and career readiness and help target appropriate remediation or acceleration. Under a new law, all high school students are required to take an assessment that

measures college and career readiness in order to receive their high school diploma.

The ACT is scored on a scale of 1 to 36, with 36 being the highest possible score. A total of 184 Illinois graduates earned a perfect composite score of 36 based on their most recently submitted ACTs.

MEETING from page 7

“The mission of the Illinois Association of School Boards is to light the way for its members by developing their competence and confidence through a robust toolkit designed to build excellence in local school board governance, including:

- Premiere training experiences;
- Networking opportunities for mutual support;
- Valuable benefits, pooled services, information, and expertise;
- Advocacy on behalf of public education; and
- A platform for a strong collective voice on common interests and concerns.”

IASB Board President Karen Fisher said “the changes were necessary to clarify the purpose of our Association.” She said the board has engaged in the revisions for months “with major input from IASB’s administrative team.”

The board, which held its quarterly meeting for the first time in Nor-

mal, Illinois, also reviewed and approved other policies, evaluated the executive director, and heard a number of reports from officers, committee members and IASB staff.

Updates were also given on the 2014 Joint Annual Conference, including registrations and resolutions for the Delegate Assembly. The board agreed to continue the practice of raising conference registration fees by 4 percent annually. The fee for the 2015 conference will be \$420 per person, with complimentary registration for spouses and families. The cancellation fee will be raised by \$20 and exhibit booth fees by \$50.

The board also agreed to extend invitations to three new Service Associates firms. They are: Segal Consulting, Tria Architecture, Inc., and eRateProgram, LLC.

The next meeting of the IASB Board of Directors is scheduled for Nov. 20 and 23 in Chicago.

Superintendent Huff, of Joplin, to talk on tornado preparedness

The Illinois Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (INSPRA) has invited C.J. Huff, Superintendent of Schools in Joplin, Missouri, to speak on the value of developing an effective communications plan through building positive relationships.

In May 2011, a deadly tornado struck Joplin, devastating the area and destroying Joplin High School. Huff led the district’s recovery effort and he has agreed to share his story.

The presentation will take place at 6:30 p.m., Sep. 25 at Addison Trail High School, 213 N. Lombard Road in Addison. The cost to attend is \$20 per person. The event is open to the public, but reservations are required. More information, including registration details, can be found on the INSPRA website at www.inspra.org. INSPRA is an organization of Illinois school communications practitioners. Its mission is to strengthen support for Illinois public schools and to improve education for students through responsible public relations.

To learn more about INSPRA, visit their website.

State agency has experts working to write Lincoln lessons

Then Illinois educators were selected by application to participate October 24-27 in Springfield in interactions with local and national experts in order to create lesson plans on the topic “Lincoln, Race and Slavery.” Specifically, participants will use primary and secondary sources to create middle school and high school lesson plans aligned to the new Illinois Learning Standards. These lesson plans will be posted to the ISBE website for public access and sharing.

NEWS HEADLINES

Belleville (Aug. 9, *News-Democrat*) The number of students expelled at Belleville area high schools have fallen off during the last five years. A newspaper survey found high school expulsions vary from school to school, and from year to year, but overall, expulsions in public high schools in the area are trending downward. A total of 146 students were expelled during the 2013-14 school year at the 11 largest high schools in St. Clair and Madison counties: Belleville East, Belleville West, Cahokia, Collinsville, East St. Louis, Edwardsville, Granite City, Highland, Mascoutah, O'Fallon and Triad. Five years ago, during the 2009-2010 school year, the same schools expelled 179 students.

Bloomington (July 25, *Bloomington Pantagraph*) Among the new ideas shared at a school Tech Fest at Bloomington High School July 24, was having students help fix computer problems. The idea is to have students take a class that not only includes fixing computers but also covers business skills and customer service. With so many school districts adopting "1-to-1" or "1:1" computing programs, which provide individual students with laptops or computer tablets, problems are growing. Bloomington District 87 has gone from having about 2,000 computer-related devices to 4,000 in a short period of time, creating a growing number of device breakdowns. The district is working with a local firm to develop a program in which students will learn to do basic repairs on these devices while also learning about setting up a parts department and ordering parts.

Danville (Aug. 20, *Champaign News-Gazette*) Danville students

receive one of the cheapest square meals in town but school officials hope to make it free for all students 2015-16 school year. "It's looking pretty promising for next year," said Greg Lazzell, the district's food service director, who is hoping to do that through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Community Eligibility Provision. "It's going to eliminate the administrative burden on school districts and needy families. "And it's going to provide greater access to breakfast and lunch." Lazzell said. The Community Eligibility Provision, made possible under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act, gives schools that serve predominantly low-income children a new option for meal certification. Under it schools are not required to collect or process applications.

Elgin (Aug. 11, *The Daily Herald*) Elgin Area School District U-46 has launched a campaign to improve student attendance rates. Student attendance for the 2013-14 school year was at 94.3 percent. With a message aiming to raise awareness about the importance of staying in school, the goal is to increase the district's attendance rate to 98 percent. "It's easy to underestimate the significant impact missing a few days of school can have on a student's overall performance," Superintendent José Torres said. "Poor attendance is one of the major contributing factors to learning losses like poor reading skills or high school dropout rates." U-46 families will receive Attendance Toolkits with information about excused and unexcused absences and tips for getting students to school on time each day.

Normal (Aug. 8, *Bloomington*

Pantagraph) McLean County Unit District 5 administrators have decided not to combine kindergarten and first-grade classes at Carlock Elementary School — an idea weighed in response to low enrollment. Superintendent Mark Daniel said there is not enough time to create a blended classroom and communicate those plans to the parents before the start of school on Aug. 18. There were 14 kindergartners and 19 first-graders enrolled for the new school year. Overall, there was a 17.5 percent decline in the school's enrollment from last year.

Statewide (Aug. 4, ISBE press release) Illinois leads the Midwest region in the number of schools that have earned federal certification for efforts promoting healthy habits, primarily physical exercise and nutrition. From urban to rural areas in the state, 247 schools now have earned certification through what is called the "HealthierUS School Challenge." Michigan is second with 140 schools. "These types of school programs are critical given today's busy family lives and an abundance of cheap and convenient fast food with low nutritional value," said State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch.

Statewide (Aug. 19, *The Daily Herald*) With football season just getting in gear, high school sports coaches throughout the state soon will have to take classes on how to reduce concussions among young athletes under a new state law signed Aug. 19. The bill requires the Illinois High School Association to create an online class that coaches of every sport will have to take and renew every two years. State officials said it should be ready this football season.

JOINT ANNUAL CONFERENCE
November 21, 22, 23, 2014

PREVIEW from page 1

year saw protracted negotiations between the Macomb Education Association and the CUSD 185 Board of Education. Negotiating team members discuss the processes and strategies that ultimately resulted in a three-year suspension of the salary schedule.

Creating and Funding Healthy Green School Projects: Share tools and strategies to launch a successful Green School Committee, increase nutrition/fitness awareness, and integrate sustainability into curriculum. Get checklists to win grant funding for waste reduction and energy. Acquire templates to earn the national Green Ribbon Award.

Staying out of Headlines: Board Financial Oversight: Understand which questions to ask and the documents you should review to enhance your district's financial health, increase regulatory compliance and be the best board member possible.

Making Sense of Talking Dollars: Learn how board members forge partnerships with their chief school business official to build trust, maintain a fiscally strong district and transparent communication with their community.

Control Your Labor and Workers' Comp Cost: Learn how to control your labor costs by negotiating a two-tier wage scale in lieu of a reduction in force. Control your Workers' Compensation costs by using pre-employment strength testing and post-injury evaluations and by implementing a light duty program.

Business Office Operations: Expenses, Cost Control, AFR: Come and learn the basics of business office operations and the business administrator's role in managing cash, purchasing, meeting budgeting responsibilities, state financial reporting and overseeing the expenditure process.

Rural Issues: Less money, changing student census, non-funded mandates, rising costs, outdated buildings; sound familiar? These are some issues rural district leaders are facing. Share your concerns and solutions in this interactive discussion of key issues

while networking with your peers.

Featured again this year are tours of Chicago Public Schools, a Carousel of Panels event, professional development activities for board and district secretaries, coffee and conversation sessions, Delegate Assembly, conference bookstore, and three highly interesting and entertaining general session speakers.

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

The conference preview document will not include room locations for events, but that information will be available in the official Conference Program, which can be picked up Nov. 21-23 at the registration desk at the Hyatt Regency. More information about this year's conference can also be found at: <http://www.iasb.com/jac14/>.

One new development to note for this year's Conference: ongoing construction and remodeling of elevators and escalators on the Regency (Gold) Level of the West Tower at the Hyatt Regency Chicago means those areas will be closed. This includes the IASB Delegate Assembly, which will be held at its regular 10:30 a.m. time slot on Nov. 23, but will be held at the Grand Ballroom Level in the Hyatt's East Tower.

Please see the official conference program for more details. Announcements will also be made online and at specific conference events.



"DO YOU WANT THE MEANING OF LIFE ACCORDING TO WIKIPEDIA OR ACCORDING TO ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA?"

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- September 11 – Starved Rock Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Seneca
- September 16 – IASB/IASA Professional Advancement Seminar, Lombard
- September 23 – IASB/IASA Professional Advancement Seminar, Springfield
- September 23 – Shawnee Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Vienna
- September 23 – Corn Belt Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Stanford
- September 25 – Wabash Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Robinson
- September 25 – Blackhawk Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Geneseo
- September 29 – West Cook Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Elmwood Park
- September 30 – Illini Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Mahomet
- October 1 – Southwestern Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Belleville
- October 1 – Three Rivers Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Lockport
- October 1 – Kishwaukee Division Dinner Meeting, Prairie Hill
- October 1 – Central IL Valley Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Morton
- October 2 – Abe Lincoln Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Decatur
- October 2 – Egyptian Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Fairfield
- October 2 – Western Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Augusta
- October 6 – Northwest Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Polo
- October 16 – DuPage Division Dinner Meeting, Lisle
- October 21 – Kaskaskia Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Ramsey
- October 22 – North Cook Division Dinner Meeting, Des Plaines
- October 23 – Two Rivers Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Virginia
- October 29 – South Cook Division Dinner Meeting, Orland Park
- October 30 – Lake Fall Division Meeting, Grayslake