

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

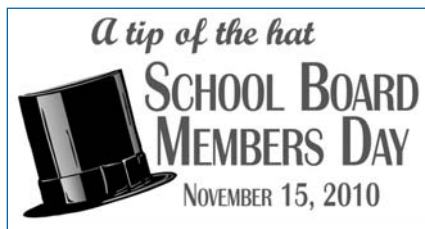
October 2010 / Issue No. 702

A salute: School Board Members Day

Materials help promote school board service

In salute and thanks to the nearly 6,000 school board members in the state, Nov. 15, 2010, is designated as “School Board Members Day” in Illinois.

This is an opportunity to build community awareness and understanding about the crucial role an elected board of education assumes in a representative democracy. It also can help to build a stronger relationship between school board members and the community.



That is why IASB is encouraging appropriate district personnel to contact their community leaders, business partners and local civic groups to join in recognition efforts.

By working with the community, districts can assure that these dedicated people are recognized for their board policy and governance work on

behalf of children, parents and families. If districts prefer, these Illinois-specific materials may be adapted for use in January, when many states celebrate board member service for an entire month.

IASB has prepared an extensive list of materials to help districts organize their own recognition activities:

- Memo from IASB’s executive director emeritus
- News release for local media
- Tip sheet of suggested activities
- Letter to community groups
- Sample article for district newsletter

See **DAY** on page 3

New brochure previews 2010 Joint Annual Conference

A preview booklet for the 2010 Joint Annual Conference is now available online to all districts, including a master schedule of all Conference events, descriptions and time slots for 115 panel sessions, descriptions of seven full-day pre-conference workshops



More Conference News:

- Resolutions listed, p. 6
- IASB officers endorsed, p.7
- School designs judged, p. 8
- Sample news releases, p. 8

and two half-day sessions, and more. The preview booklet is available at: <http://www.iasb.com/jac10/preview10.pdf>.

This year’s event will be the 78th Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators and Illinois Association of School Business Officials in Chicago.

The Conference Preview also offers information about the Chicago Public Schools Tour, Carousel of Panels,

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School law column	Page 11

Principal mentoring supported

Page 10

Fruits and vegetables program aims to offer healthier meals

ISBE has announced that 188 schools in Illinois will participate in a Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program during the 2010-11 school year.

"This program not only increases children's access to fresh fruits and vegetables but also teaches them why it's important to eat healthy foods and exercise," said State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch.

The 188 schools participating in the federally-funded program will share equally in more than \$3.3 million, based on each school's student enrollment numbers. Program funding runs through June 30, 2011.

The USDA piloted the program in 2002 and it was expanded to include all states for 2008-2009. More than 360 schools statewide applied for the 2010-11 grant program. To learn more about the program and see a list of the participating schools, visit: http://www.isbe.net/nutrition/htmls/ffv_program.htm.

Intergenerational school program hosted by ISBE

A summit hosted by ISBE aims to get older adults into classrooms in order to improve student success and promote healthy lifestyles

ISBE and the Illinois Department on Aging co-hosted the first Illinois Summit on Aging and Education on Sep. 20 to highlight the best intergenerational practices to improve student performance and increase graduation rates.

The summit at Illinois State University in Normal, mobilized resources to address two critical economic issues: dropout rates and health. The goal is to eventually come up with new solutions through intergenerational partnerships.

For more information, log on to <http://www.solit.siu.edu/GenServeGen>.

State's scores inch down on ACT college entrance exam for juniors

The state's high school class of 2010 posted lower scores on the ACT college entrance exam compared to their 2009 counterparts, scoring 20.7 compared to 20.8 the year before. The U.S. average ACT score in 2010 was 21.0.

Illinois, which began required testing of all juniors eight years ago, had been steadily increasing its ACT scores over the previous three years.

"The ACT is a benchmark that helps us when we look at preparing students for college and career readiness," noted state school Superintendent Chris Koch in a prepared statement.

Koch noted that the decline in the state's ACT score this year was not statistically significant, falling less than a tenth of one point. State officials also pointed out that Illinois students posted the highest composite score of the eight states nationwide in which 90 percent or more of students take the ACT. Other states with 90 percent or more of their students taking the ACT include Colorado, Louisiana, Tennessee, Wyoming, Michigan, Kentucky and Mississippi.

In fact, the 145,520 students included in the state's class of 2010 reflect the largest number of test takers in history for a given year, and represent the scores achieved by all Illinois 2010 juniors in both public and private schools.

In the previous three years, Illinois reported ACT scores of 20.8 in 2009, 20.7 in 2008 and 20.5 in 2007 (see accompanying chart "Trends in student performance in Illinois").

This year's state scores broke down as follows:

English	20.3
Mathematics	20.7
Reading	20.8
Science	20.5

The state recently adopted the internationally benchmarked Common Core Learning Standards in English and Math for grades K-12. The

standards, written under the leadership of the Council of Chief State School Officers and the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices, aim to better prepare students for college and career.

"As we move forward with our newly adopted, more rigorous Illinois Learning Standards, we would expect college and career readiness to improve," said State Superintendent Christopher Koch.

SAT scores little changed

While the state's ACT score dropped .004 in 2010, the composite score of the alternate SAT fell .007 percent from 2009.

But the slight drop on the SAT showed up across the board. Average writing scores of Illinois students taking the SAT dropped from 583 to 577; average math scores dropped from 604 to 600; average reading scores dipped from 588 to 585.

Yet Illinois students scored far above the national average on all three tests. The average score in reading was 585 in Illinois, compared with

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Newsbulletin

**Illinois Association
of School Boards**

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**ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION
OF SCHOOL BOARDS**

DAY from page 1

ters and other publications

- Sample marquees
- Public Service Announcements (PSAs)
- 2010 Illinois School Facts
- Education quotes
- Proclamation for use by local government
- Printable logo (to save to computer)
- Certificates for district presentation to board members (provided in a fillable form to personalize and print directly from the website)
- Evaluation form

For more information, contact Linda Dawson at ext. 1104, or ldawson@iasb.com. Information about the observance is available online at: <http://www.iasb.com/sbmd.cfm>.

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professional development for board and district secretaries, and profiles of the general-session speakers.

Registration is continuing. Conference registration packets and badges for all registrations received prior to Sep. 17 will be mailed on Nov. 6. Those registering after that date will need to go to the registration desk at the Hyatt East Tower, in the Grand Ballroom Foyer to pick up their materials.

Build your own conference planner

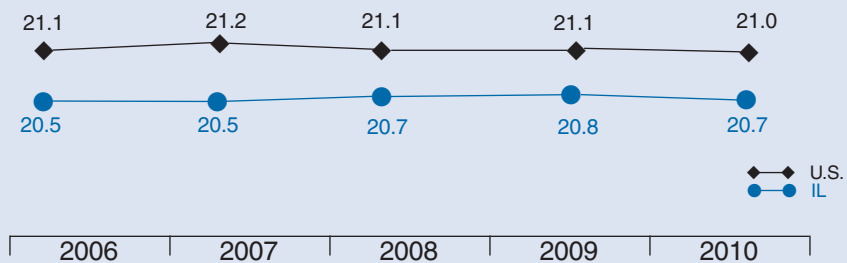
Before leaving for Chicago, board members, superintendents and secretaries can build their own personal events calendar to print out and take to the conference. This planner is posted on IASB's Members-Only website at <http://members.iasb.com>.

The calendar lists all events by day and type in chronological order. The calendar allows multiple events at conflicting times to be selected.

Questions about the online conference planner or the Members-Only website can be directed to ext. 1105 or 1131.

Trends in student performance in Illinois

ACT Composite scores, 2006-10



Source: ACT

ACT trend data shows that Illinois, which tests 100 percent of its students, is nearing the U.S. average in composite scores. This is remarkable as many states test only their best students.

ACT from page 2

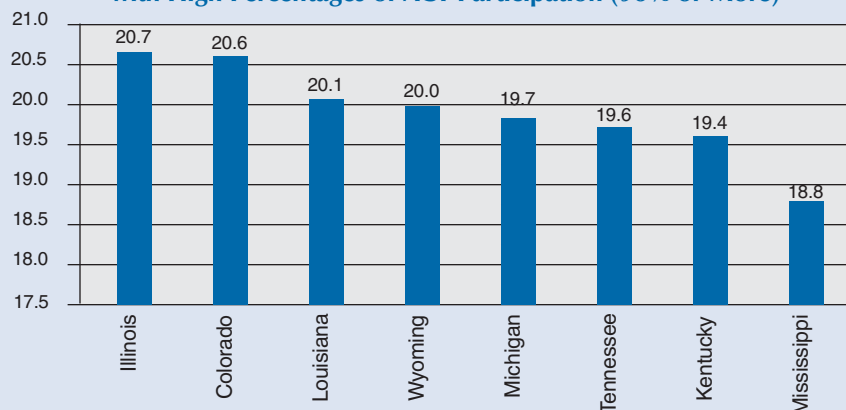
501 nationally. The average score in math was 600 in Illinois, compared with 516 nationally. The average writing score was 577 in Illinois, compared with 492 nationally.

Over the past decade, state officials note that Illinois SAT scores have risen 14 points higher in math, and 17 points higher in reading. Writing scores in Illinois, now at 577, have risen 9 points in that same decade. Experts point to this data to show that a one-percent overall drop in the annual score such as the one shown on the SAT this year in Illinois is hardly an indicator of a trend.

Although the SAT is the test most favored in many eastern and western states, it is not as widely used as a college entrance exam in the middle of the country. Unlike the ACT which all Illinois students take, only about 6 percent of Illinois students take the SAT, typically only the best students.

Nationally, SAT scores have leveled out. The national reading score for 2010 was unchanged from 2009 at 501; the national writing scored dipped to 492 from 493 last year, and the average math score increased to 516 from 515.

2010 High School Graduates' ACT Composite Scores in States with High Percentages of ACT Participation (96% or More)



Comparing just those states with a high ACT participation rate shows Illinois students scored the highest composite total.

Federal jobs funds disbursement proceeding now

Some debate how soon schools should spend it

The state of Illinois is preparing to distribute \$415 million from the federal Education Fund Jobs Program and hopes to complete disbursements by November, according to the governor's office.

The long-anticipated funding will be made under the general state aid formula. Federal guidelines require that states use the money for compensation and employee benefits that support education and school operations. That means that school districts will have the ability to hire back teachers who have been laid off, retain current teachers, or hire new staff. All educators and school-based employees are covered.

"I know that school districts are facing unprecedented funding challenges," Gov. Pat Quinn said in a letter distributed Sep. 20 to Illinois school board members. "While we have maintained timely general state aid payments, other funding has been delayed due to limited cash flow. We are pursuing a combination of borrowing tactics to make sure all FY 10 commitments are met, and all future appropriated funds will be paid."

School districts and other local education agencies have begun requesting payments through the Illinois Web-Based Application System (IWAS). The education jobs fund allocations are posted on the ISBE website at http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/ed_jobs_alloc_11.pdf.

Districts have until September 2012 to spend the money, which comes at a good time for many school districts, including **Alton CUSD 11**.

Dave Elson, Alton superintendent, says the Illinois budget crisis has left the district about \$2.47 million short in state aid. But the \$1.3 million promised to the district through the education jobs money will mean the district will not have to borrow money as planned to keep 25 teachers in class-

rooms this school year, he said. Last year, the district laid off 49 people, including more than a dozen teachers.

There is some debate over determining precisely for what purposes school districts can and cannot use the funds. Governor Quinn is encouraging schools to use this money as soon as possible.

ISBE has asserted, however, that these funds are to be received on a reimbursement basis as they previously described in their webinar on September 9, 2010, and that reporting is required pursuant to their previously stated directions.

Although the messages of ISBE and the governor appear at odds, "both are appropriate," according to Ben Schwarm, associate executive director for advocacy and governmental relations at IASB. "The bottom line is that it is a local decision," Schwarm said.

In any case, districts aren't guaranteed the money. They have to spend it out of their own pockets before the federal government reimburses them. Eligible expenses are to be reimbursed only after procedures are followed and required forms are filed.

As expenditure reports are received the state says it will voucher education jobs fund payments on or about the 10th and 25th of each month. Districts that submit reports will receive funds near the end of the month, according to state officials.

Among the categories that a school district may support with Ed Jobs Funds are: salaries, performance bonuses, health insurance, retirement benefits, incentives for early retirement, pension fund contributions, tuition reimbursement, student loan repayment assistance, transportation subsidies, and reimbursement for childcare expenses. These are all covered under the umbrella of "compensation and benefits and other expenses, such as support services," according to ISBE.

Allowable expenses are spelled

out in the U.S. Department of Education's "Initial Guidance for States on the Education Jobs Fund Program" (available online at: <http://www2.ed.gov/programs/educationjobsfund/applicant.html>).

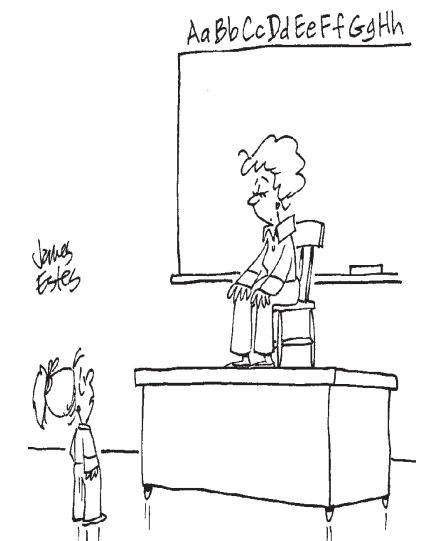
ISBE has posted a list of FAQs for guidance on use of the funds. It can be found online at: http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/ed_jobs_faq.pdf.

School districts are also encouraged to learn from an ISBE webinar that describes the jobs funds payments process in more detail. That information is located at: http://www.isbe.net/arra/html/ed_jobs_fund.htm.

School guidance now online for handling flu

Information has recently been promulgated from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on how schools can help reduce the spread of seasonal influenza. Specifically, CDC has just published two new flu-related items for schools, which together serve as the federal agency's 2010 Guidance for Schools.

This information is available online at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/guidance.htm> and at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/school/cleaning.htm>.



"Mrs. Storlie, is there any truth to the rumor that the school has mice?"

Workshops help board secretaries prep for April elections

Hundreds of board secretaries and other individuals designated to receive nominating papers for board elections recently attended five election workshops IASB offered around the state.

The workshops were designed to assist these individuals in their role as the local election official for the April 5, 2011, school board elections.

Participants learned about election procedures and deadlines, the organizational meeting, and election of new officers.

Under Illinois law, the local election official for school districts is the board secretary unless the school board designates another person or persons to receive nominating papers. Thus, workshop attendees included elected board secretaries, superintendent's secretaries who serve as the board secretary, other district employees who serve as the board secretary, and district employees who are the "designated representative" of the school board secretary for purposes of the election.

The workshops were presented in Mt. Vernon, Rock Falls, Springfield, Park Forest, and Glendale Heights. Presenters were Anna Lovern, director of policy services, IASB, and Alan M. Mullins, an attorney with Scariano, Himes and Petrarca.

Next year's elections are generating more questions than usual because of the recent state law changes to the deadlines for circulating and receiving petitions, withdrawals and challenges.

IASB prepared and mailed election packets to superintendents, board presidents and secretaries on Aug. 23. District election officials can also order candidate kits from IASB by mailing or faxing order forms, or by calling ext. 1108.

The kits, which cost \$4 each, include the school board candidate calendar, "Some Rules for Staying on the Ballot," "The Effective School Board Member," "Before You Turn in Those Petitions," and other helpful articles and pamphlets.



The first election workshop, held on Sep.17 at IASB headquarters in Springfield, drew a capacity crowd of board secretaries and local election officials.

State election materials and forms

The Illinois State Board of Elections also has available online two publications regarding the 2011 elections.

"The Local Election Officials Handbook" contains samples of various formats for nominating petitions and certificates of ballot, along with forms for the loyalty oath, statement of candidacy, withdrawal from candidacy, petition objections, write-in candidates, and other information relative to the 2011 Consolidated Elections. It can be downloaded at: [http://](http://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/2011LEO-Book.pdf)

www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/2011LEO-Book.pdf.

"The Candidate's Guide" includes filing dates and the general requirements for filing. Additional information is provided regarding nomination procedures and the objection process, and a section that provides answers to some of the more frequently asked questions about nominating petitions and procedures.

This PDF can be downloaded at: <http://www.elections.il.gov/Downloads/ElectionInformation/PDF/2011Candidateguide.pdf>.



IASB Director of Policy Services Anna Lovern kicks off the initial election workshop.

Resolutions committee backs six proposals to delegates

Ideas to be weighed by IASB assembly Nov. 20

IASB's resolutions committee has recommended the adoption of six of 11 resolutions submitted by local school districts, to be decided next month in the annual Delegate Assembly.

The resolutions committee, chaired by Vice President Carolyn D. Brooks, met on Aug. 6 in Oak Brook. Each of IASB's 21 divisions vote annually to choose a resolutions committee chairman, and the 21 chairmen comprise the committee. The committee is empowered to recommend the approval or disapproval of proposed resolutions, and to determine which resolutions are presented to the assembly.

A Report to the Membership summarizing the resolutions, and the IASB Resolutions Committee's recommendations on each, was mailed to member districts in late September.

Member delegates will meet on Saturday, Nov. 20, at the 2010 Joint Annual Conference. Resolutions adopted there will set policy for IASB for the coming year.

The resolutions that received a "do adopt" recommendation are:

Student Academic Placement, submitted by Millstadt CCSD 160. BE IT RESOLVED that the Illinois Association of School Boards shall: support local school district and parent collaboration, evaluation and decision-making regarding the grade-level placement of students based upon their academic, social, and emotional maturity and readiness to advance. When parental advancement requests deviate from normal school advancement, school districts maintain the authority to evaluate and place students.

Multi County School District GSA Offset, submitted by Consolidated SD 158, Huntley: BE IT RESOLVED that the Illinois Association of School Boards shall: support legislation to modify the GSA (General State Aid) Formula calculation for multi-county PTELL (Property Tax Extension Lim-

itation Law) school districts which have lost GSA for current and prior years due to an estimate of Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) utilized by the county providing the limiting rate to the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for use in calculating a district's GSA.

Income Tax Payment Offset, submitted by Indian Prairie CUSD 204. BE IT RESOLVED that the Illinois Association of School Boards shall: support legislation to allow school districts to "set-off" income tax payments due to the state against amounts owed by the state to school districts, when the state is delinquent in their already approved and appropriated payments to school districts.

Budget Stability for School Districts, submitted by Consolidated SD 158, Huntley: BE IT RESOLVED that the Illinois Association of School Boards shall: support legislation requiring the Illinois General Assembly to determine the amount of funding for educational entitlements and General State Aid no later than March 31 (3 months prior to the start of the budget year).

Freedom of Information Act Changes, submitted by Keeneyville SD 20: BE IT RESOLVED that the Illinois Association of School Boards shall: support legislation to modify the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) to facilitate school districts' compliance with the Act and to remove unnecessary burdens on units of local government. The legislative changes should:

- Increase allowable FOIA response time from 5 business days to 10 business days
- Exclude official school breaks in business day response time
- Allow denials for commercial purposes
- Allow denials for any request that is unduly burdensome
- Clarify language that would allow a request to be denied if it is unduly burdensome to the public body if the public body deems compli-

ance with the request would result in excessive response costs

- Allow the imposition of reasonable fees regardless of the number of pages being provided
- Remove the balancing test between the public's interest and the employee's right to privacy in the privacy exception
- Expand the evaluation exemption to cover all school employees
- Exempt employment applications to protect the privacy of individuals that apply for high profile employment positions
- Delete provisions requiring public bodies to write a virtual legal opinion as to why they are claiming an exemption
- Delete provisions requiring public bodies to prepare a virtual legal pleading before being challenged for a denial
- Limit public bodies' liability by limiting a court's inquiry to violations of the FOIA Act and not the content of information provided
- Force the Public Access Counselor to defend its decisions before a court of law if a public body is sued
- Allow public bodies to seek review of a binding opinion of the Public Access Counselor in the county in which they are located rather than just Sangamon or Cook counties.

ISBE Oversight Agreement, amendment by: IASB Resolutions Committee. The IASB shall work to modify statutes governing ISBE school district oversight panels or finance authorities...

Bonding authority and issuance must remain the responsibility of the elected board so that the duration of the oversight can be minimal.

For a list of all the resolutions put forward, download the Report to the Membership at: <http://www.iasb.com/pdf/reporttomembership2010.pdf>.

For more information, contact your division representative to the resolutions committee or phone IASB governmental relations at ext. 1132.

Alesandrini, Brooks slated by nominating panel to lead IASB

The IASB Delegate Assembly will elect Association officers on Nov. 20 at the Joint Annual Conference in Chicago. IASB's nominating committee has endorsed the following slate of officers: Joseph Alesandrini, **Pekin CHSD 303**, as president; and Carolyn D. Brooks, **West Richland CUSD 2**, Noble, as vice president.

Alesandrini, who has served on his home district board of education since 1985, is finishing his first term as president of IASB and 13th year on the board of directors. In addition to representing the Central Illinois Valley division, he has also previously served as treasurer for the association and as chair of the audit and resolutions committees. He has served on the executive committee since 2003.

On the national level, Alesandrini has also served as an alternate delegate four times and has been a delegate to the National School Boards Association for the past three years. He was awarded the Illinois State Board of Education's "Those Who Excel Meritorious Service" award in 2001.

Brooks, who has been on her local board in Noble, Ill., since 1995, is completing her first year as Association vice president. She represented the Wabash Valley division of IASB from 2005 through 2009, and served as IASB treasurer for three years.

She chaired the resolutions committee in 2010, and the audit committee in 2008 and 2009. She also served as a delegate at the NSBA Delegate Assembly in 2008, 2009 and 2010.

The nominating committee, which met in August to interview IASB leadership officer candidates, is chaired by past president Mark C. Metzger and includes Jackie Mickley, Michelle Skinko, Tom Cunningham, Joanne Zendol. John Metzger and Dave Barton serve



Joe Alesandrini



Carolyn D. Brooks

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. 20.

Directors meet, assesses performance

The IASB board of directors met in Oak Brook for its quarterly meeting and annual retreat on Aug. 27-28. The directors reviewed the results of the executive director evaluation and their self-assessment survey.

Each year the board assesses its performance in complying with board process policies – the group of policies the board has established to govern its own work.

Their next meeting will be held the day before the Joint Annual Conference, on Nov. 18 at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. The board also will meet briefly on Nov. 21 to reorganize for the year.

Meetings in 2011 are scheduled for the following dates:

- Feb. 11-12, Chicago
- May 13-14, Springfield
- Aug. 26-27, Oak Brook
- Nov. 17/20, Chicago

**2010 IASB-IASA-IASBO
JOINT ANNUAL
CONFERENCE
NOVEMBER 19-21, 2010 ·
CHICAGO**

NEWS FROM IASB

Annual school calendar for 2010-11 now available online

IASB's Annual School Calendar of legal dates and deadlines for 2010-2011 is available on the IASB website as a PDF at: <http://www.iasb.com/law/Cal10.cfm>.

Subscribers to IASB's Online Update service will get word if or when any revisions are made to this school calendar.

New issue of Journal covers mentoring process

Providing the opportunity for sage, much-needed mentoring of new teachers, principals and superintendents is a job school



boards too often ignore. To find out why boards need to be cognizant of the important role that mentoring plays, and why the board might wish to support positive formal mentoring opportunities, see the cover story in the November/December 2010 issue of *The Illinois School Board Journal*.

You'll also find articles, among others, on the value of formal board self evaluations, and the board's role in school discipline. There is also a second installment of a three-part series on factors affecting school closure (this one deals with junior high school closure).

Resolutions ready for Delegate Assembly voting

Member districts will be voting on 10 new resolutions and one amendment at this year's Delegate Assembly. (See story on page 6.) Read the details in the *2010 Report to Membership* online at: <http://www.iasb.com/pdf/reporttomembership2010.pdf>.

School design contest winners chosen for display

Winning school designs will be on display at the 2010 Joint Annual Conference, including those earning awards in the Exhibition of Educational Environments, sponsored by IASB Service Associates.

The awards were made by a blind jury pool of architects and superintendents on Sep. 16 at IASB offices in Springfield. This year's jury chose one Award of Distinction (the top winner), two Awards of Merit, and four Honorable Mentions. Winners will be announced at the first general session of the Joint Annual Conference.

All 18 projects entered in the competition will be displayed throughout the conference in the Grand Ballroom foyer of the Hyatt, located between the conference registration desk and the bookstore.



Judges in the Exhibition of Educational Environments competition choose the best school designs on Sep. 30 in Springfield.

Criteria include suitability for stated program requirements, functional relationships, aesthetics, grade level or departmental organization, flexibility, expansibility, compatibility with external environment, uses of new technology, barrier-free accessibility, energy efficiency, environmental controls, site adaptation, vehicular and

pedestrian circulation, activity area groupings, security and building orientation, among others. To be eligible to win, construction projects had to be completed in time for occupancy with the start of school this fall.

At the conclusion of this year's conference, the 18 projects on display will be added to the School Design Data File. A service developed by IASB for its Service Associates organization, it is available for use by IASB member school districts and their architectural firms. The file currently consists of a detailed computer database on nearly 400 design projects involving Illinois public schools.

School officials and architects may use this new service by calling the IASB Communications Department, at ext. 1131. Or email your query to jnelson@iasb.com.

Attending Conference? News releases may help spread good word

Sample news releases have been developed by IASB to assist those districts that want to pro-actively share what they will do and/or did at the 2010 Joint Annual Conference.

Both releases contain language that allows the district to specify who attended, how much the district spent, and how it fit into the district budget. There are additional blanks where the district superintendent or board president can fill in names and titles with suggested quotes or make optional remarks.

These sample news releases are not prescriptive; rather, district officials are encouraged to edit or add

their own comments or data to suit their purpose and situation. District leaders may also want to schedule interviews with local media, instead of relying on the news releases alone.

When choosing to use either news release, IASB recommends that they be printed on district letterhead and distributed to local news media outlets. These releases may also be useful for informing parents and the community via district newsletters and websites.

Districts intending to use the news releases are also encouraged to include copies in the board meeting packet as part of the report agenda items at the board meeting that precedes the

November conference.

This year's conference will again feature a roundtable discussion "Wrap It Up and Take It Home" – with more information about how to effectively share and report your conference experiences. It will be held from 8 to 9:30 a.m., Sunday, Nov. 21. See the conference program for details.

A memo from IASB and both sample news releases are available on the IASB's Members-Only website: <http://members.iasb.com>.

For more information about either release or for help with using the Members-Only website, contact the IASB Communications Department, at ext. 1131.

Pre-Conference workshop to cover insurance and risk management for school leaders

Titled "Insurance and Risk Management for School Administrators," a pre-conference course will be offered on Nov. 19 to provide an introduction to insurance and loss prevention for school administrators, business officials, and board members in pre-K through 12th

grade programs.

The course will address the school code, state statutes, insurance-related concerns and much more.

It will be offered at the Hyatt Regency Chicago in the East Tower, Plaza Ballroom B, from 7:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Friday.

The fee is \$215 and includes continental breakfast, lunch and handouts. Completion earns Administrators' Credit. Board members earn ten Master Board Member credits and a LeaderShop elective credit.

Register by Nov. 8; to register, call Judy Williams at IASB, ext. 1103.

NEWS HEADLINES

Arlington Heights (Sep. 3, *The Daily Herald*) After finding a “no cell phone” rule hard to enforce, Northwest Suburban High School District 214 has loosened its rules to allow them in hallways and around school grounds. “You could spend eight hours a day enforcing the current rule,” Superintendent David Schuler said. The old rule required students’ phones to be turned off and out of sight during the day. The new one allows students to use them at times outside the classroom. It mainly prohibits students from using cell phones “in any manner that disrupts the educational environment or violates the rights of others.” Cell phones are still prohibited from being used in locker rooms or bathrooms.

Chicago (Aug. 30, *Chicago Tribune*) The “credit recovery program” at Julian High School shows why supporters say online learning has the potential to improve education. It can be inexpensive, convenient and flexible. Thus, it is one of the fastest-growing areas of education. But some say a lack of research makes it difficult to know whether the programs work. Chicago District 299 now offers a battery of online programs, ranging from math and reading enrichment, in which elementary students spend a few hours a week online using a specific curriculum, to a virtual charter school with students learning almost entirely from home. The latest initiative came on Aug. 24, when the district announced a pilot program to add 90 minutes to the day at 15 elementary schools using online courses in place of certified teachers.

LaSalle (Aug. 24, *News Tribune*) The LaSalle-Peru THSD 120 board approved a new four-year contract with teachers on Aug. 23. The contract provides for a .5 percent increase in pay in the first year of the contract, a .75 percent increase in the second, a one percent increase in the third

and a 1.5 percent increase in the final year. Although this pay scale features “much lower” increases than in past years, board president Jim Quesse said both sides walked away from the collective bargaining table happy. “Both sides of the table were very agreeable,” Quesse said. “Everyone knows the condition of the state. Everyone knows the condition of school funding.”

Plainfield (Aug. 19, *Joliet Herald News*) The Plainfield CCSD 202 school board agreed on Aug. 16 to look at collapsing salary schedules for administrators. The proposed 2010-11 budget includes \$21 million in cuts, including 159 layoffs, and savings from freezing administrator salaries and requiring them to pay 10 percent of their health insurance. The district projects a \$7.5 million deficit. Currently, the step increases between each year of service is 2.5 percent, officials said. The district is looking at increasing it by .5 percent so principals would receive a 3 percent step increase each year. The district is also looking at collapsing the salary matrix from 15 steps to 12 steps.

Pleasant Hill (Aug. 23, *Quincy Herald-Whig*) Pleasant Hill SD 69 has taken a different approach to negotiations. It opened discussions in an “off year” to look at ways to save money. Administrators then took a voluntary pay freeze before opening this year’s contract negotiations, and the entire staff eventually opted to join them. Teachers got a 3 percent raise for last year under their contract and were due a 3.5 percent raise this year, but they opted not to take it. The move pushed that raise to the 2011-12 school year. But the board did give the teachers step increases, amounting to less than 1 percent in most cases. The result was a significant savings for a district with a roughly \$3 million budget. The district still had to cut about \$290,000, reducing staffing,

chopping supply budgets and trimming all athletic budgets. But the school community managed to spare essential programs, including early childhood education programs.

Statewide (Sep. 1, *Bloomington Pantagraph*) Just about half of all Illinois students are eligible for free or low-priced meals at school, according to the Illinois State Board of Education. Figures show the percentage of kids who qualify based on their parents’ incomes hit 51.5 percent on June 30. That is up from 49 percent in 2009. Since 2003, the number of students who qualify has risen 24 percent, even though overall statewide enrollment has not grown that sharply. A clearer picture is expected to emerge soon when statewide figures for the current school year begin being tallied. But, anecdotal evidence shows eligibility could be on the rise.

Villa Grove (Aug. 30, *The Associated Press*) An Illinois appellate court ruled on Aug. 24 that a Villa Grove student can keep his autism helper dog in school. The 4th District Appellate Court sided with the student’s family. The family had argued that the boy’s yellow Labrador retriever is a service animal allowed in schools under state law. The boy’s mother had testified that the dog prevents the boy from running away, helps him focus on his homework and calms him when he has a tantrum. The court upheld a November decision.

Wheaton (Aug. 31, *The Daily Herald*) A decision to hire an energy conservation consulting firm is paying off for Wheaton Warrenville Unit District 200. The district has achieved an estimated 25 percent cost savings, totaling about \$1.2 million, since it started implementing strategies provided by the private firm. District 200 spokesman Robert Rammer said the firm was hired two years ago because of a concern about budget cuts and rising expenses.

Principal mentoring a model for school leaders to copy

Is your school board doing enough to make sure that new educators in your district will “hit the ground running” and succeed in their first year on the job?

As professionals in your schools launch their careers as principals, superintendents and teachers, are they constantly asking themselves what a

veteran in their position would do next or what pitfalls might surround their next step?

The problem is that formal mentoring help is not widely available, except to principals. In fact, such help is provided through a state-funded program only to new school principals, and is generally not provided to new teachers or superintendents in Illinois.

The mentoring program for principals could well become a model for other educators to replicate. Known as the Illinois New Principal Mentoring Program (INPM), it is managed by the Illinois Principals Association (IPA), and it has served about 1,000 school principals in the past three years. Although funding for the principal mentoring program was reduced by 60 percent for the current school year due to state budget cuts, the program remains fully functional.

“We’re still going to be able to run a program that matches new principals up with mentors who can help them, but funding cuts have been felt,” said Jason Leahy, executive director of the IPA. “We certainly hope for more help from the state in the near future, and we are most grateful to ISBE for retaining some level of funding when many education programs were zeroed out.”

No state funding at all has been provided by lawmakers, however, for the mentoring program for new superintendents called for in recent legis-



Jason Leahy

lation. The legislature set up such a program under Public Act 96-62 in 2009. Unfortunately, implementation was made contingent on state funding, and lawmakers have failed to fund it, which means the program currently is not in force.

No state program or requirement is in place, for that matter, for teacher mentoring. Most teachers are largely on their own when it comes to learning the ropes, unless their school district has stepped in to set up a mentoring program at the local level.

That’s why the role of school boards in supporting good formal mentoring opportunities for educators has grown more critical. Experts say local support for mentoring begins with board member awareness of the need for mentoring of new staff. Only veteran school teachers and administrators, after all, can pass on pertinent knowledge from past experiences when novices encounter concerns while getting acclimatized to their new position.

Leahy said a formal mentoring program is the best means of ensuring that new employees get the right answers in time to ensure continued success.

The INPM program is designed to make sure that every new principal receives a high-quality mentoring experience so he or she thrives the first year and beyond. The program is defined by standards and criteria that focuses professional development experiences and enhances a new principal’s leadership. New leaders receive mentoring from proven, trained mentors who are paired with new principals based on geography, grade level and need.

School districts may contract for mentoring services with an ISBE-certified Mentoring Provider best suited to meet their needs. A complete list of certified providers can be found at: http://www.ilprincipalmentoring.org/website_documents/2010-

[2011%20Provider%20Contact1.pdf](#).

Leahy said that mentoring is available for those who will be in their first year as a building principal, not for experienced principals new to a particular school district or former assistant principals who previously served five years or more at another school. School districts can require, however, that these new principals go through a new principal mentoring program.

Under the rules of the INPM program, the role of each mentor includes:

- forming a supportive professional relationship with the new principal;
- assisting the new principal in adjusting to his or her new role and in developing skill as an instructional leader;
- coaching, observing, and providing feedback to the new principal on aspects of organizational management;
- helping the new principal identify significant problems and issues that act as barriers to school improvement, as well as meaningful solutions to these; and
- providing structured opportunities for the new principal’s reflection on his or her educational practice.

Certified mentors will have at least three years of experience as a building principal in Illinois, and have demonstrated success and professional references.

The principal and mentor must spend at least 50 hours in contact and in activities demonstrating involvement in the mentoring process. The mentor and recipient may make some or most of their contact via telecommunications devices, but must meet in person at least near the beginning, middle and end of the school year.

Additional information about the INPM program can be found at: <http://www.ilprincipalmentoring.org>.

Court leaves schools wary on student organization membership



Nika Grabavoy served as an extern in IASB's Office of General Counsel this summer

DEVELOPMENTS IN SCHOOL LAW

Can public schools constitutionally require student groups to accept “all comers” as active members in order to receive official school recognition and the use of channels of communication? At the public university level, the U.S. Supreme Court recently held yes in *Christian Legal Society v. Martinez*, WL 2555187 (June 28, 2010).

An “all comers” policy places a qualification on student groups to be school approved—they must accept all students as participants regardless of their beliefs. The Christian Legal Society chapter at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law (Hastings College) failed to conform to Hastings College’s policy in that individuals were not accepted into the group unless they signed a “Statement of Faith.” The “Statement of Faith” excluded individuals who participated in “unrepentant sexual activity.”

Although this case took place at the level of a public university, nothing indicates that the secondary education level was excluded.

The Christian Legal Society claimed that its First Amendment

rights of free speech, free exercise of religion, and freedom of association were violated. It claimed that Hastings College’s policy singled out Christian Legal Society because of its views. The Christian Legal Society produced evidence of other student groups that were granted official recognition while having restrictive bylaws. For example, the Hastings College Silenced Right student group limited voting membership to those that are committed to spreading the pro-life message. In addition, the bylaws of the Hastings Democratic Caucus limited membership and leadership roles to those who did not “exhibit a consistent disregard and lack of respect for the objective of the organization.” Hastings College granted both groups official school recognition.

Hastings College argued that it was the Christian Legal Society’s conduct and not its Christian viewpoint that prevented it from gaining official recognition. Hastings College argued that after it denied the initial application, the Christian Legal Society officially requested exemption from the school policy. Hastings College claimed that the policy applied to every student group and that even though the Christian Legal Society was denied official recognition, it was still allowed access to rooms and communication on the school grounds.

The Supreme Court held that the “all comers” policy was viewpoint neutral and reasonable, and thus did not violate the Christian Legal Society’s Constitutional rights.

The U.S. Supreme Court rejected the Christian Legal Society’s argument that *Boy Scouts v. Dale*, 530 U.S. 640 (2000), applied. *Dale* held that the freedom of association allows private organizations to exclude an individual if that person’s presence affects the group’s ability to advocate its viewpoints. *Dale* was distinguishable because it dealt with regulations compelling a group to include unwanted members, but Hastings College only applied *indirect pressure to modify* Christian Legal Society’s membership policies.

School officials should take note of this case to avoid future conflicts and litigation. Because the Supreme Court’s close division in this case, school officials wishing to implement an “all comers” policy should: treat every student organization equally by not allowing some groups with restricted bylaws to be recognized and not some others; in accordance with the Supreme Court holding, school officials should not allow exemptions to a policy that applies to everyone equally; and as always, consult the board attorney for guidance.

State Board begins hearings on budget development for FY 2012

The Illinois State Board of Education is launching a series of public budget hearings as it prepares its Fiscal Year 2012 education budget recommendation for the governor and General Assembly.

The ISBE finance and audit committee is asking participants to identify their funding priorities and suggest budget solutions.

School leaders planning to participate are asked to bring five copies of written testimony to submit to the ISBE committee. A sign-in sheet will be available. The committee is asking participants to respond to the following “guiding questions” as the panel considers next year’s budget.

1. The State Board has prioritized General State Aid, mandated categoricals, such as special educa-

tion and transportation, and early childhood, as budget priorities in the past. Should this focus continue during tough economic times?

2. The state has been unable to provide timely payments to districts for two consecutive years, thus making local planning difficult. What actions should be taken to

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Lobbying event seeks volunteers to push Congress to help public schools

School board members are being sought once again to help lobby Congress on critical school management issues. The National School Boards Association's Federal Relations Network (FRN) seeks board members from every congressional district in the country to help advocate for public education.

Organizers say the ultimate goal is to make public education a top priority of the federal government. The next FRN Conference will be held Feb. 6-8, 2011, in Washington, D.C.

There are several ways to learn more about this opportunity.

Those visiting the 2010 Joint Annual Conference in Chicago can stop by the legislative booth between 7:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., Friday, and 7:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m., Saturday. It is located directly across from the bookstore, Ballroom Level, Hyatt East Tower. A panel presentation about the FRN events will also be made on Saturday, Nov. 20, from 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Contact Susan Hilton, assistant director for governmental relations, at ext. 1135. Or find out more online by visiting NSBA at: <http://www.nsba.org/SecondaryMenu/FRN.aspx>.

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address this situation?

- In each of the last two years, the state budget has been supplemented by \$1 billion from federal stimulus funds. How should education expenditures change in the future with likely reduced federal spending, but no decrease in federally mandated programs? Should the state impose cost savings due to these reduced federal funds or leave cuts to the discretion of local districts?

Those who are unable to attend

a hearing, according to ISBE, are encouraged to email responses to the guiding questions to isbefy12@isbe.net.

The following meetings remain:

- **Nov. 8, 3 to 5 p.m., Belleville** — St. Clair County Regional Office of Education
- **Nov. 15, 4 to 6 p.m., DeKalb** — DeKalb County Regional Office of Education
- **Nov. 30, 4 to 6 p.m., Champaign** — Champaign Public Library, Robeson Pavilion, Room C

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

October 26 – Northwest Division Dinner Meeting, Sterling CUSD 5

October 28 – Kaskaskia Division Fall Dinner Meeting, Germantown SD 60

November 4 – Two Rivers Division Fall Dinner Meeting, North Greene USD 3

November 18 – IASB Board of Directors' Meeting, Hyatt Regency, Chicago

November 19 – IASB Pre-Conference Workshops, Sheraton Chicago

November 19 – Chicago Schools Tour, Hyatt Regency Chicago

November 19-21 – IASB, IASA, Illinois ASBO Joint Annual Conference, Chicago

November 20-21 – A Professional Development Opportunity for the Board/District Secretary, Swissotel, Chicago

November 19 – Illinois Council of School Attorneys' 24th Annual Seminar on School Law, Hyatt Regency Chicago, for school attorneys only. Advance registration and fee required.

November 21 – IASB Board of Directors' Meeting, Hyatt Regency Chicago

For more current information on coming events, see the IASB web site at www.iasb.com/calendar/.