

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD *Newsbulletin*

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27 local school finance referenda go to voters

A total of 27 school finance referendum questions appeared on the Nov. 2 general election ballot, including six property tax increase proposals and 15 bond issues, according to state records. But dozens of additional school districts would benefit from six countywide referenda on sales tax propositions earmarked for school facility purposes.

According to the Illinois State Board of Elections, countywide sales tax propositions for schools were sched-

uled in the following counties: Iroquois, Knox, Macon, Montgomery, Sangamon, and Warren. The earmarked sales tax for schools is allowed under a state law that took effect in January 2008. Revenue from the sales tax would benefit all school districts in the county where such questions win voter approval.

Districts placing property tax increase proposals before voters in November included **Dwight Common SD 232**; **McHenry CHSD 156**, McHen-

ry; **Millburn CCSD 24**, Wadsworth; **Mokena SD 159**; **North Pekin-Marquette Heights District 102**, Marquette Heights; and **Taylorville CUSD 3**.

All sought to raise the so-called tax cap rate, except the tax proposal in Dwight. The education fund increase proposition in Dwight asked voters this question: "Shall the maximum annual tax rate for educational purposes for Dwight Common School Dis-

See **REFERENDA** on page 4

Recent law changes push petition filing window to December 13-20

Recent changes in the Election Code have advanced the calendar dates concerning the time periods for filing nomination petitions as well as objections for the April 5, 2011 school board election. The changes in these election deadlines have created confusion and concern in some quarters.

While the filing dates for nominating petitions have occurred in January in the run up to past school board elections, those dates now fall in December 2010 for the 2011 board election. The first day for filing is Dec. 13 and

Also see *Requirements for nominating papers*, page 4

the final day is Dec. 20.

Thus, a school board candidate's petition must be filed in the office of the local election official no earlier than the start of the business day on Dec. 13 and no later than 5 p.m. on Dec. 20.

Few if any districts will close for winter break as early as Dec. 20, so the last day for filing nominating petitions should fit in with business as

usual in most districts. However, the law is clear that the office of the local election official, usually the board or district secretary, must be open until 5 p.m. of that last day, regardless of the regular closing time for the office.

Nominating papers may be filed by the candidate in person, by mail or by an agent. If the papers are in order, the local election official will write or stamp the date and time filed on each sheet. Candidate's names will

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Budget hearings

ISBE kicked off a series of statewide public budget hearings on Oct. 18 to help the Finance and Audit Committee prepare the education budget to be submitted to the General Assembly and governor. The last of these hearings will be held Nov. 30 in Champaign. For details, see <http://www.isbe.net/news/2010/oct4.htm>.

Reporting procedures

The federal offices of Management and Budget as well as the Department of Education have issued clarifying guidance on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Local education agency reporting requirements and instructions have been updated to incorporate changes. Districts with questions regarding reporting procedures can contact ISBE's Division of Funding and Disbursement Services at 217-782-5256. Information on the purpose, permissible use and prohibitions of the new Education Jobs Fund program can be accessed at http://www.isbe.net/arra/pdf/arra_reporting_inst.pdf.

Reorganization studies

ISBE is now accepting agreements for the FY 2011 School District Reorganization Feasibility Studies. A tool to help school districts investigate reorganization options, the feasibility studies are funded on a "first come-first served" basis. Ranging between \$4,500 and \$8,000, the grants are based on the number of school districts and combined student enrollment of the districts involved in the study. For information, contact Michelle Heninger, School Business Services, at 217-785-8779. Procedures, funding allotment and sample forms are available at <http://www.isbe.net/sfms/html/feasibility.htm>.

Funding available to schools via child and adult care food program

The Illinois State Board of Education recently announced the availability of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), a federally funded program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, administered by ISBE. And it is not too late for schools or school districts to seek funding.

The program is designed primarily to assist child care centers, Head Start programs, before- and after-school programs, and the like — including schools — with funding to provide nutritious meals to children in their care. Participating organizations provide meals to enrolled children at no additional charge and without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability.

Individuals in households that receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) are automatically eligible to receive free meal benefits. Children enrolled in Head Start or Early Head Start programs are also allowed to receive free meal benefits at approved Head Start facilities.

Those schools operating school-sponsored Pre-K programs, including preschool programs, and before- and after-school programs, can be funded under CACFP as child care centers.

Reimbursement is handled as follows:

- The amount of meal reimbursement received depends on each child's eligibility category. The CACFP also provides cash-in-lieu of donated commodities, which is paid on each lunch and supper served to children. Children enrolled in Head Start are automatically eligible for free meals.
- Meals for children who have no Household Eligibility Application on file can only be claimed in the paid category.

- Meals for children without a CACFP Annual Enrollment Form on file cannot be claimed. Meals for children not enrolled at the facility cannot be claimed.
- Up to three meal services per child per day can be reimbursed. The combinations are one meal (breakfast, lunch, and/or supper) and two supplements (snacks), or two meals and one supplement per child per day.
- The meals and supplements served to children must be eaten while in attendance at the site. Meals and supplements cannot be sent home with the child and claimed for reimbursement.

A list of participating Illinois institutions in the CACFP is available on ISBE's Nutrition Programs Interactive Map at <http://webprod1.isbe.net/NutSvc/>.

For more information, contact ISBE's Nutrition Programs office, at 800/545-7892 or 217/782-2491.

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**

Those Who Excel program honors seven on boards

Local school board winners making impact

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) singled out seven school board members for their outstanding service to schools at the 36th annual Those Who Excel/Teacher of the Year banquet on Oct. 16 in Peoria. Another highlight of the ceremony was the announcement of the Illinois Teacher of the Year (see story below).

There are several levels of recognition in the annual awards program, including the top-level Excel award; the next level, called the Award of Merit; and the next level, called the Award of Recognition.

Receiving the Award of Excellence was Steven G. Adams, **Community Consolidated District 62**, DesPlaines.

Five school board members won the Award of Merit, including: Robert J. LeFevre, Jr., **Township High School District 211**, Palatine; John S. Ewald, **Hamilton County CUSD 10**, McLeansboro; Bonnie Shlensky, **Township High School District 113**, Highland Park; Stephen Omolecki **Ottawa Elementary District 141**, Ottawa; and Jill Bertels, **Edwardsville Community Unit School District 7**.

Receiving the Award of Recognition was Barbara Stanger, **Westchester District 92½**.

"These individuals are being rec-

ognized for their exceptional dedication to the students of our state," said State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch. "Every day they go above and beyond the norm to provide the best educational environment possible for their students. Their efforts are making a significant difference in the lives and learning of children across Illinois."

Candidates were nominated by their local school districts or members of their communities. The nomination includes a short biography of the nominees, their philosophy of education, professional development, community involvement and views of the state's most pressing educational needs. Letters of recommendation are required, as well.

A committee of peers chooses the award winners. The committee represents statewide education organizations and former award winners.

The categories for recognition are:

- Classroom teacher
- School administrator
- Student support personnel
- Educational service personnel
- School board member and/or community volunteer



Steven G. Adams



Robert J. LeFevre, Jr.



John S. Ewald



Bonnie Shlensky



Stephen Omolecki



Jill Bertels



Barbara Stanger

- Teams
- Early career educator

One hundred fifty-nine winners were chosen this year. A complete list of award recipients can be found online at: http://www.isbe.net/pdf/those_who_excel10-11.pdf.

Alton English instructor named 2011 Teacher of the Year by ISBE

Annice Brave, an instructor from Alton CUSD 11, was recently chosen the 2011 Illinois Teacher of the Year.

The winner was chosen from eight finalists at the 36th annual Those Who Excel banquet Oct. 16 in Peoria. Brave, who teaches English and journalism at Alton High School, was among nearly 160 educators and leaders honored as part of the recognition program.

"I'm happy for the district; I'm happy for my high school," said Brave. "We work so hard every day. We have



Annice Brave

100 teachers of the year at that building, but I was the one who filled out the papers."

State superintendent of education Christopher Koch said Brave's

"passion for teaching is evident."

"Annice pursues every available avenue to find ways that will improve teaching and learning and is an excellent representative of Illinois' teach-

ers," Koch stated.

Students say Brave often worked additional hours after school to develop a student radio show in partnership with a local community college, and she spends her lunch hour in the classroom so that students can work on their school newspaper.

A 23-year teaching veteran, Brave obtained National Board certification in 2001. She chairs the English department at Alton High School, and is faculty sponsor of the student literary magazine, *Calliope*.

REFERENDA *from page 1*

trict Number 232, Livingston and Grundy Counties, Illinois, be increased and established at 2.38 percent upon all the taxable property of said School District at the value, as equalized or assessed by the Department of Revenue, instead of 1.88 percent, the present maximum rate otherwise applicable to the next taxes be extended for said purposes?"

The other form of tax increase on the ballot involved an increase in the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) limiting rate. Five school districts asked voters for permission to raise the tax cap rate. The amount of tax increase sought ranged from 95 cents per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation in Taylorville, to 29 cents per \$100 of equalized assessed valuation in Mokena.

The 15 bond issues on the ballot included 12 building bond issues and three working cash fund proposals. The building bond issues were voted on in: **Damiansville District 62; Flora CUSD 35; Medinah SD 11**, Roselle; **Virginia CUSD 64; Wesclin CUSD 3**, Trenton; **West Chicago Elementary District 33; Gurnee SD 56, McHenry CHSD 156; Dunlap CUSD 323; Washington CHSD 308; Wayne City CUSD 100;** and **Freeburg CHSD 77.**

The three working cash propositions were placed on the ballot in: **Cary, CCSD 26, Lemont-Bromberek CSD 133A,** and **Palatine CCSD 15.**

Proposed bond issues ranged in size from \$1.2 million in Damiansville to \$70 million in McHenry.

In addition, three school districts sought voter authorization to elect school board members at large and without restriction by area of residence within the district.

Districts seeking at large representation included **Brown County CUSD 1**, Mt. Sterling; **Meredosia-Chambersburg CUSD 11**, Meredosia; and **Virginia CUSD 64.**

The IASB website and the December issue of the *Newsbulletin* will have the November school referendum results.

Nominating papers for school board candidates require specific information

When it comes to running for the school board, nominating papers consist of the following:

- Statement of candidacy, which includes a request that the candidate's name be placed on the official ballot, the address of the candidate, the office sought, and a statement that the candidate is qualified for the office and has filed (or will file before the close of the petition filing period) a statement of economic interests as required by the Illinois Governmental Ethics Act.
- Nominating petitions signed by the required number of voters residing within the district. Each signature

must have an address. Petitions must be securely bound together, with pages numbered consecutively, and each page must carry the notarized signature of the petition circulator.

- A receipt from the county clerk showing that the candidate has filed the statement of economic interests before the day for filing, but with the year (2010). Incumbents who are filing for another term need only provide a copy of the receipt from their May 1, 2010, filing. Filing another statement of economic interest is not necessary.
- A loyalty oath is optional. A candidate may choose to file it or not.

2011 ELECTION *from page 1*

appear on the April election ballot in the order in which their nominating papers are officially received in the secretary's office.

The period for filing objections to nominating petitions begins after the last day for filing and continues for the five business days following the final filing date. Most school districts will likely be out for winter break during at least a portion of that time.

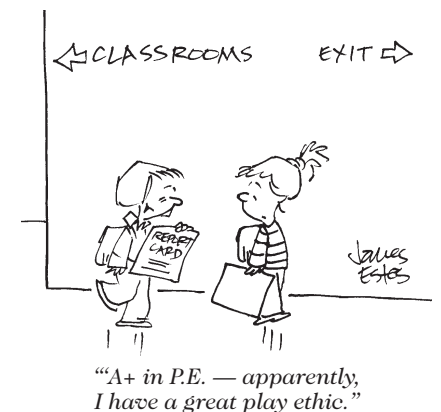
Since weekends are not counted as "business days," this year the last day for filing objections is Dec. 28. This is also the last day that a candidate who has filed for two seats, perhaps for a full-term seat and a partial term, may file a "withdrawal of candidacy" form for one of the seats. Failure to withdraw from running for one of the open seats means that the individual's name will not appear on the ballot for either seat.

In addition, if there are simultaneous filings on the first day, a lottery must be held before Dec. 29 to determine position on the ballot. This duty may be performed at any time between Dec. 20 and Dec. 29, so it should be possible to post the appropriate notices

and hold the lottery earlier, rather than later.

For more information about the recent statutory changes to the election calendar, visit the website at: <http://www.iasb.com/elections/changes.cfm>.

Meanwhile, the Illinois State Board of Elections and the appropriate county clerk are good places to contact for election guidance. Check the 2011 Candidates Guide on the State Board of Elections website, www.elections.il.gov. Additional questions should be directed to the board's attorney.



Total of 33 driver's ed waiver requests seeking OK

At the end of 2006 a total of 219 waivers from school mandates had been granted to Illinois districts to allow them to change their driver's education program requirements. To the present date, 344 such waivers have been granted to 160 different school districts, including three requests approved this year, a new report from ISBE shows.

An additional 33 new applications for waivers and modifications of driver's ed requirements have recently been transmitted to the General Assembly for approval, according to the report.

Since the state waiver law took effect in 1995 a total of 149 school districts have been granted waivers to permit them to raise fees for their driver's ed programs. Most of the new waiver applications this year regarding driver's ed are seeking authority to raise program fees.

This is no surprise, experts say, because under state law §50 is the most that schools ordinarily can charge students to teach them how to drive.

But school leaders say that amount—set way back in 1985—is insufficient to help cover the actual cost of providing drivers' education, including rising expenditures for gas, maintenance of cars, and teacher salaries and benefits, among other costs.

What's more, schools are required to waive the driver's ed fee for students who can't afford to pay it. Meanwhile private firms charge hundreds of dollars to provide similar drivers' training courses.

The state requires high schools to offer students a drivers' education course that includes at least 30 hours of classroom time and six hours of behind-the-wheel training. Besides authorizing a student fee, Illinois reimburses school districts about \$176 per pupil for behind-the-wheel training and \$40 for classroom instruction.

The Illinois waiver law permits school districts to petition ISBE for a waiver or modification of School Code mandates or of the State Board's rules and regulations. To apply, a school district must demonstrate that it can

address the rule or mandate's intent in a more "effective, efficient, or economical manner" or that the waiver is needed "to stimulate innovation or improve student performance."

The next round of waiver requests from schools must be submitted to the state board by Jan. 7 in order to be included in the Spring 2011 Waiver Report, which is to be submitted to the General Assembly in March next year. Those received after Jan. 7 will be included in the Fall 2011 Waiver Report, which is to be submitted to the General Assembly in October 2011.

There is no deadline for modifications of School Code mandates or waivers and modifications of administrative rules; approval must be granted, however, before a modification can be implemented.

A brief overview of all waivers granted to school districts to date is contained in the new ISBE publication, *Summary of Waiver/Modification Requests*. The report is available free online at: <http://www.isbe.net/isbe-waivers/pdf/waivermod.pdf>.

How well do you know Illinois School Law? Find out

Q: What types of elections involve public school districts?

A: Elections conducted by public school districts include the election of school board members and various public policy propositions, such as to increase authorized property tax rates, issue bonds, consolidate districts, create single-member school board districts, or deactivate a high school. A school election also may involve an advisory question placed before the voters.

Q: What laws govern the election of school board members?

A: School board elections, except those involving school districts that have adopted Article 33 of the School Code, are consolidated elections governed by the general election

laws of the state. Provisions peculiar to school boards are found in the School Code.

10 ILCS 5/1-1 et seq.
105 ILCS 5/9-1 et seq.
105 ILCS 5/33-1 et seq.

Q: When must a school board submit a public policy advisory referendum to vote at a regularly scheduled election?

A: Whenever a petition regarding a question of public policy is submitted to a school board signed by a number of voters residing in the school district equal to at least 8 percent of the votes cast for the candidates for Governor in the preceding gubernatorial election, the board must cause the question to be submitted to the voters. The result of an advisory referendum

is not binding on the school board.
10 ILCS 5/28-6

Q: How does a school board candidate acquire a place on the ballot?

A: To be placed on the ballot, a candidate must cause to be filed a nominating petition and a statement of candidacy with the secretary of the school board or such other person as the school board may designate. The statement of candidacy must include a receipt showing that a statement of economic interests has been timely filed with the county clerk.

5 ILCS 410/1-101 et seq.
105 ILCS 5/10-10

Source: *Illinois School Law Survey*, Eighth Edition, by Brian A. Braun, IASB. Contact IASB publications for a copy at 217/528-9688, ext. 1108.

Strikes few and far between in school districts so far

Just two school districts have faced strikes this year, but neither lasted long, with the use of federal mediators. A strike of 628 employees, most of them teachers, in **Danville District 118** was launched on Sep. 13 and settled on Sep. 16. An earlier strike involving 269 certified & non-certified employees in **Mahomet-Seymour CUSD 3** began on Aug. 19 and was settled the following day.

As of early October, there were no strikes in progress, although two school districts had received a notice of intent to strike. Seven other districts had already settled contract disputes.

The Danville strike settlement came in a seven-hour bargaining session, the first session the two sides had held after union members went on strike over salary issues three days earlier. The union, which represents about 400 certified staff and about 200 noncertified staff, had been working under its previous one-year contracts, which expired on June 30.

District 118 officials said they

needed to take a financially conservative approach to negotiations due to the unstable economic climate and the uncertainty of state funding, which makes up about 51 percent of the Danville district's revenue.

In Mahomet-Seymour, the board approved a one-year contract with a 2.6% raise (step + .5%) for teachers, 3.5% (step + 1%) for aides and 3.5% for other support staff. The teachers organization had rejected the district's offer for a two-year contract with salary increases of more than two percent for the first year... and just over three percent for the second. The union had proposed a 5-percent raise in the current year and 6-percent the next.

A strike was narrowly averted by last-minute negotiations with teacher representatives and a federal mediator in the newly formed **North Mac CUSD 34**, Girard. A total of 169 certified and non-certified staff had filed an intent-to-strike notice on Sep. 22, but the two sides reached a two-year agreement in Sunday night bargaining on Oct. 3. Health insurance was

said to be a key sticking point.

Another strike was averted one day earlier in **Evergreen Park District 124** when negotiators approved a two-year contract that includes a total pay raise of 4.75 percent for teachers. The agreement calls for 205 teachers and support staff to get a 2.25 percent raise this school year. Teachers would receive a 2.5 percent raise in the 2011-12 school year, while support staff would get a 3 percent increase that year. The agreement came two weeks after teachers had filed notice of intent to strike.

The list of other recent contract settlements includes:

- **Harmony Emge SD 175:** 54 IFT/AFT certified teachers. Notice filed Aug. 20; Settled Sep. 1.
- **Illini Bluffs CUSD 327:** 65 IFT/AFT full and part time faculty. Notice filed Aug 2; Settled Aug. 10.
- **Waukegan District 60:** 1,250 IFT/AFT certified staff employees. Notice filed June 21; Settled Sep. 9.

Source: Illinois Association of School Administrators: <http://www.iasaedu.org/>.

Koch urges caution, fiscal restraint on negotiations, finances

Christopher Koch, state superintendent of schools, is extending his message of caution and fiscal restraint in regard to school finances – a message he has offered to school board members and superintendents for more than a year.

“Be careful with raises because you don’t know what the future holds,” Koch told those assembled in Fairbury for IASB’s Corn Belt Division dinner meeting on Oct. 14. Koch said raises now may also send the wrong message to the public and legislature.

“Some legislators have implied that there’s enough money for schools because teachers get raises,” he said. What lawmakers aren’t taking into consideration is that most contracts are not renewed annually. A district may be contractually tied to salary increases for decisions made two or

three years ago when finances were much better.

Boards looking at contract negotiations should work with IASB and other education associations “to keep lines of communication open,” he said.

In other remarks, Koch said the state’s unsuccessful quest for “Race to the Top” funds this summer actually took Illinois in a positive direction by helping to get some necessary reforms passed and to adopt new common national standards for language arts and math.

“We’re comparing kids to those in other states and other countries,” he said. “Why not have common standards?”

Illinois is among 40 states that have joined in the national standards movement and one of 27 states working on a common national assessment

for those new standards. The assessments, to be given online for quicker results, will be true course assessments, he added, not just a snapshot.

In answer to audience questions, Koch said the U.S. Department of Education is “encouraging” a longer year or longer school days but is not likely to mandate such a move soon.

In regards to the federal jobs money that is being distributed, he said ISBE has posted guidance in a Q&A format on its website. While districts are being encouraged to spend the money sooner rather than later, they do have two years within which to spend the money.

Koch thanked the board members for the leadership and diligence, adding about the current financial situation, “I wish I could reassure you it’s not going to get worse.”

NEWS HEADLINES

Arlington Heights (Oct. 5, *Pioneer Press*) A Buffalo Grove youngster's lawsuit over Township High School District 214's drivers education fee has hit a wall. The Illinois 1st District Appellate Court affirmed Sep. 30 the trial court's dismissal with prejudice of the lawsuit. The suit had sought to have the district's \$350 fee for its drivers education class reduced, saying that the majority of the money goes into teachers' salaries and benefits. Plaintiffs sought to have the class included in the Illinois Constitution's free-education clause. The courts disagreed.

Chicago (Oct. 5, *Chicago Tribune*) A federal judge on Oct. 4 sided with the Chicago Teachers Union by ruling that last summer's layoffs of more than 700 tenured teachers was handled improperly. The decision by U.S. District Judge David Coar follows a months-long battle over termination of teachers. Nearly 1,300 teachers were laid off this year to help fill a gaping budget hole. Under Coar's order, the district had 30 days to work with the union on a process that would give tenured teachers "a foot in the door" in pursuing current job openings. The order also bars similar layoffs in the future. Of nearly 749 tenured teachers dismissed, 417 have been rehired in the system, CPS officials said. The district issued a statement saying it is considering options including a possible appeal.

Chicago (*Chicago Sun-Times*, Oct. 7) The City Council on Oct. 6 "ordered" Chicago District 299 to postpone demolition of the Whittier School field house and restore heat cut off on protesting Pilsen parents. An engineering report called the field house "unsafe," so CPS plans to demolish it and put down artificial grass as a play area. Parents in the Pilsen neighborhood say another engineering firm determined the structure is repairable, so they want it convert-

ed into a library and parent center.

Mt. Vernon (Oct. 4, *Register-News*) According to the Illinois State Board of Education, schools in Illinois started their current academic year owed a total of \$774 million by the state. Schools are not alone. In his quarterly report released in July, Illinois Comptroller Daniel Hynes painted a grim picture of a state's finances in crisis. Hynes reported a backlog of more than \$4.7 billion in unpaid bills and fund transfers. That compares to \$2.785 billion still owed at the end of the previous fiscal year. "Just as important, the delay in paying vouchers was 153 working days this June compared to 99 days at this time last year," the report indicated.

Mundelein (Oct. 4, *The Daily Herald*) Approximately 40 video cameras will keep watch over Mundelein High School as part of a new security system being added to the campus. The cameras will monitor activities in hallways, at building entrances and in the parking lots. More private areas, such as bathrooms, will not be equipped with surveillance gear, officials said. The cameras are part of a computerized network. They're replacing an older closed-circuit system that should be phased out by Jan. 1, according to a school board memo. The new system allows administrators and security staffers to view live and recorded video going back two weeks. National studies have shown the use of video surveillance is rising at high schools and elementary and middle schools across the country.

Naperville (Oct. 10, *Aurora Beacon News*) Aurora District 204 now has a pilot program that accommodates food intolerance of some students by offering alternate foods that do not trigger their food allergies. Currently nine families at three of the district's schools are participating. The gluten-free, casein-free meals all come

in their own container, and are labeled with the recipient student's name.

Normal (*The Pantagraph*, Sep. 28) A "late start to school" in Normal CUSD 5 may improve collaboration and save the school district money. Teachers at one high school will use political cartoons to design lesson plans for their students. Elementary school teachers will review homework to help kids improve reading. Kindergarten teachers at another elementary school will share insights about their former students with their first-grade counterparts. The activities are all part of 10 planned late-start Wednesdays that Unit 5 will hold this year. They were organized to give teachers time to work together after the district trimmed \$1 million from its professional development budget, said Superintendent Gary Niehaus. Teachers arrive 30 minutes early and students one hour late, giving teachers 90 minutes to collaborate. With this format, substitute teachers, at an average cost of \$85 a day, aren't needed.

Peoria (Oct. 8, *The Journal Star*) During the four years since it began, Jumpstart's Read for the Record has continued to break the world record for the most children reading the same book on the same day with an adult in their life. The program, joined this year by Peoria District 150's 3-to-6-year-old class at a school in Junction City, is designed to draw attention to the reading crisis by pointing out nearly half of the children in low-income neighborhoods lag years behind their peers when they start first grade. Nearly 3 million children have been involved in the reading day efforts so far, and an estimated 2.5 million were expected to join in on Oct. 14. Jumpstart has raised \$6.2 million for books and supplies and sponsored nearly 800,000 books for low-income children. More about Read for the Record can be found online at readfortherecord.org.

McElligott wins Holly Jack award for district secretaries

Mary Ellen McElligott, a 32-year veteran of **Marquardt School District 15**, Glendale Heights, is the recipient of the second annual award for school district secretaries. She will be honored on Nov. 19, 2010, in Chicago.

McElligott was chosen to receive The Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award from among 22 “exceptional” nominees, according to contest insiders. Since 1980, she has been Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Secretary to the Board of Education for District 15, an elementary school district of 2,725 students in DuPage County.

The award was created to honor the memory of Holly Jack, a long-time employee of the association who served as an IASB Field Services Administrative Assistant and was instrumental in promoting and developing the secretaries’ program that is offered at the annual conference. The purpose is to both honor Holly’s contribution and memory and to recognize the

extraordinary work and service provided by secretaries who serve and assist their local boards of education.

A selection committee of individuals representing many groups reviewed the nominating materials and made the selection on October 12.

“As superintendent of the Marquardt School District, I have witnessed Mary Ellen’s caring and concern for the well-being of students, parents, and staff. Public education is well served to have individuals of her caliber working day-in and day-out on behalf of our clients,” said Loren May, District 15 superintendent. “Mary Ellen truly exemplifies the spirit and criteria of the Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award.”

Nominations were made by dis-



Mary Ellen McElligott

trict superintendents and school board presidents. The judges considered the following criteria: performance, initiative, innovation, staff development, self-improvement, passion for public education, and dedication. Letters of support were also accepted.

Superintendent May, and District 15 board president Susan Argentine, noted some of McElligott’s specific accomplishments, including her work on the steering committee that initiated the Glendale Heights Health and Safety Fair, her establishment of the Glenbard Administrative Network, and being a founding member of Marquardt’s District Partnership Council, as well as being recognized in the “Those Who Excel” program.

The award presentation will be made during the Secretaries’ Program at the Conference Nov. 19-21. She will also be presented at the Third General Session.

IASB to mail constitution, position statements booklet

Upcoming IASB mailings in the wake of the Joint Annual Conference will include the 2011 IASB Constitution and Position Statements booklet.

Both the IASB Constitution and the Association’s official position statements are products of the IASB Delegate Assembly, which meets annually at the conference. IASB operates within the framework of its Constitution, and lobbies on behalf of its position statements, which reflect the beliefs, aspirations and aims of the Association as established by its member school boards.

Position statements are those resolutions adopted by the IASB Delegate Assembly. The statements provide major policies for the Association and establish an official stance on legislation and related matters of public policy.

Tools can help in sharing about conference

Sample news releases and a special post-conference panel session have been developed by IASB to assist those districts that want to share and report what their representatives saw, heard, did, and learned at the 2010 Joint Annual Conference.

In these days of tight budgets and increasing demands for accountability, IASB believes that public school districts should be pro-active in sharing their board development experiences.

The news releases contain language that allows the district to specify who attended, how much the district spent, and how it fit into the district budget and board policy. Districts may choose to use one or both sample release. Each has optional remarks, depending on how the district plans to report or share its experiences.

These sample news releases are

not prescriptive; rather, district officials are to edit or add their comments or data as needed.

They may also want to schedule interviews with their media or presentations at a board meeting or to community groups, instead of relying on the news release alone.

IASB recommends that the sample news releases be printed on district letterhead and distributed to local news media prior to leaving for conference. It is also suggested that the board president or superintendent schedule time to answer questions.

The releases may also be useful in district newsletters and websites.

Sample news releases and memos are available on the Members-Only website: <http://members.iasb.com>. For more information about the sample news releases, contact the IASB Communications Department, at ext. 1131.

Board self-evaluations offer a good chance to step back, move forward

Facilitating board self-evaluations has long been a core service of the IASB field services staff; in fact, last year, the Association assisted more than 150 boards, a record number.

But how does the self-evaluation process work, and how do you begin? It begins with the board contacting the school district's IASB field services director to discuss process and timelines. Staff members say they make every effort to meet the specific needs of a participating board. The process usually begins with establishing a date for the in-district session.

"A special meeting of between two and a half and three hours seems to work best," according to Field Services Director John Cassel.

The board, generally through the superintendent and board president, and the IASB field services director, discuss and select one of the options available to structure the board self-evaluation session. Among the options available are two proven board self-evaluation instruments. Both are available online and as paper and pencil documents. Most boards find the online format to be convenient, efficient and easy.

Board members individually complete the survey provided by IASB (either online or on paper) and submit to IASB. The field services director prepares a report for the board. This report becomes the center of the board's conversation at the special meeting.

IASB recommends boards participate in some form of board self-evaluation annually to establish a baseline set of performance data that can be monitored for progress over the years. The process can help the board strengthen what it already does well or address areas of challenge, according to IASB staff members.

Working together... better

All boards have challenges and a self-evaluation allows the board to

consider improvements. Feedback from participating school districts suggests that a lack of teamwork is often a sign it is time for the board to step back and look at itself.

Board members may be harboring grievances or misgivings on the makeup of the board, or regretting that they cannot express concerns at board meetings without perhaps undermining the board. Open discussion among board members in private, with helpful facilitators to aid in a free exchange of ideas, can allow members the chance to air some concerns and misgivings. Typically, an opportunity to air concerns will allow the board to move forward.

"An IASB-facilitated board self-evaluation is not an attempt by an outsider to evaluate the board, nor is it an exercise in blame fixing or finger pointing," said Cassel. "The board self-evaluation is a means by which a board, as a governance team, steps back and looks at itself, critically examines its strengths and weaknesses, and makes plans for continuous improvement.

"Those with a strong commitment to continuously evaluate and improve their processes and work are able to provide more creative, decisive leadership for their district," Cassel said.

Lacking such a process, board work can become routine, and the board can acquire bad habits, such as a tendency to usurp the superintendent's management role or to exclude one or more board members from board deliberations. Interpersonal conflicts and misunderstandings can arise and get in the way of effective board governance.

Board members who have participated in the self-evaluation process say there are numerous other benefits, including establishing a pattern of self reflection and continuous improvement.

More information is available online at: http://www.iasb.com/pdf/bd_self_ev.pdf.

NEWS FROM IASB

Conference attendees can purchase photos after event

Members and guests attending the 2010 Joint Annual Conference will have access to a special online link where hundreds of images taken at this year's conference will be posted for viewing on a secured third party website.

There is no fee for this member service; however, you will need a password to log into the site. The website is: <http://momentshare.com/levyphoto/>.

The user name is: iasb2010; the password is: chicago.

Please note: this site will not be active until the photos are processed and posted. IASB will announce it as soon as it becomes available, along with instructions on how to access and order these photos.

Lobbyists to relay word to federal lawmakers on NCLB

School board members will have the opportunity to join their peers from across the country to tell Congress what schools think at the National School Boards Association's Annual Federal Relations Network (FRN) Conference in Washington, D.C., Feb. 6-8, 2011.

During the legislative conference participants will learn in-depth federal issues affecting schools, hear from education experts, and have the opportunity to personally lobby their members of Congress.

Significant policy decisions and billions of dollars are at stake for education in 2011, including the continuing discussion on reauthorizing the ESEA, which includes NCLB.

The goal, participants say, is to make public education a top priority of the federal government.

"You won't want to miss it," said IASB Assistant Director of Governmental Relations Susan Hilton.

Green design of middle school acclaimed by leaders, experts

Hubble Middle School program-driven design and sustainable elements in Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200 are making an impact in the educational and architectural communities.

The new facility already has received awards for exceptional educational environments, including being named “project of the year” in the K-12 education category by *Midwest Construction* magazine. The school also won a Middle School Citation from *American School & University* magazine.

Since the 190,000-square-foot facility was completed last summer, the groups visiting it have included IASB’s DuPage Division, the American Institute of Architects’ Committee on Architecture for Education, Illinois Institute of Technology students, and the West Suburban Branch of the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC).

In November, Hubble will be a tour stop at the 2010 Greenbuild International Conference & Expo, the world’s largest green building conference.

Green goes gold

Architects and designers say that from the wetlands surrounding it to the high-performance systems within it, Hubble Middle School sets a standard for energy-efficiency and environmental respect.

In May, the 190,000 square foot facility achieved “LEED for Schools” certification from USGBC. Hubble became the third school in Illinois (and the first Illinois school outside of Chicago) to achieve the certification at the Gold level. LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across several metrics: energy savings, water efficiency, CO₂ emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.



Award-winning Hubble Middle School in Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200, designed by Legat Architects, was a key stop for a touring green building conference recently.

Among Hubble Middle School’s sustainable features are energy-efficient mechanical and plumbing systems, a green roof, learning gardens, recycling stations, and a wetlands area that doubles as a detention basin.

All aboard

The district attributes much of the school’s success to the involvement of the entire school community from the very beginning of the planning process. Hubble Principal Dr. Beth Sullivan says, “There was nary a stakeholder, from the board of

education to the central office staff, who didn’t have an opportunity for input.”

Intensive board involvement throughout the project also helped realize the vision. “We just kept driving the staff and professionals to bring in the project on time and on budget,” says Andy Johnson, board president. “Not only did they do that, but they also delivered a curriculum-responsive facility. We’ve had nothing but positive responses from those who have been to the school...kids and adults.”

Conference panel handouts being posted sooner online, at Members-Only website

Like last year, many Joint Annual Conference panel handouts from the 2010 “big event” are being posted to the Members-Only website, <http://members.iasb.com>. This year, however, it was suggested that as many handouts as possible should be posted on that site sooner, so IASB’s staff made plans to have many of the handouts posted on Friday, Nov. 12.

Numerous handouts are already posted. Handouts received for posting after the deadline of Nov. 5, however, are still being posted online as

time permits.

In the wake of the 2010 Conference also, attendees will not want to miss the Joint Annual Conference evaluation survey that IASB has posted online. It is available to those who attended the conference via the IASB main conference website at iasb.com/JAC10.

The purpose of this survey is to get a “big picture” overview of conference attendees’ perceptions, as well as to provide the association with information that may assist in planning conference panel sessions and other events in the future.

Technology and Learning event has state flavor

More than 20 Illinois districts attend event

The National School Boards Association T+L (technology and learning) Conference held in Phoenix Oct. 19-21 featured more than 80 district workshops sharing best practices and innovative strategies on these timely topics. Representatives from more than 20 Illinois school districts attended.

Organizers say T+L provides a terrific learning experience for teams of technology directors, superintendents, school board members, district administrators, principals, and lead teachers. This year's conference focused on several critical issues, including:

Digital Content – How digital resources can transform learning and cut costs, including virtual schools and distance learning, open resources, innovative devices for access, Web 2.0 tools, and more.

Creating & Supporting Learning Environments – New programs that can actually cut costs while promoting safe infrastructure, 24x7 access, innovative facility designs, enhanced communication channels, green technologies, and data systems.

Education Technology Policy & Advocacy – The latest legal issues including cyber safety, sexting, student-faculty communications, strategies for building community partnerships, and the use of data to guide leadership.

International Perspectives – Projects and tools that support international collaboration between teachers & students, global perspectives on the use of technology to enhance learning, and examples of the changing global marketplace.

Professional Development Communities – Strategies for content, design, or delivery of professional development, with examples that use data and support models for continuous improvement

S.T.E.M. – Initiatives that engage students and the community, prepare

teachers, or create compelling career pathways to enhance science, technology, engineering, and math.

Two panel sessions were presented on Oct. 20 by **Maine THSD 207**, Park Ridge, and by **THSD 214**, Arlington Heights. The first session covered “Geospatial Inquiry: The New Problem-Based Literacy,” and was presented by Maine East High School staff member Aida Awad, who also presented the same panel the next day. The second session covered “Learning with Social Networking, and was presented by staff members Gabriela Stetz Jackson and Joseph Taylor.

An Oct. 21 panel session called “Doing More with Less: Reaping the Benefits of Multi-District Collaboration,” was offered by Judy Minor and Rosemary Gonzalez-Pinnick, staff members of THSD 214, Arlington Heights. It explained how to devise articulation links across multiple districts and all grade levels in such areas as curriculum, instruction, assessment, technology, and professional development, while resulting in greater alignment of resources and overall student academic gains. It was presented by staff members Judy Minor and Rosemary Gonzalez-Pinnick.

Another Oct. 21 session, titled “Drupal-icious: Designing Dynamic Web Sites with Drupal Open Source CMS,” described using an open source, content management system that can be used by school districts struggling to create a more dynamic web environment. Staff members Mary Jane Warden, Nick Peronti, and Regina Shalzi – all of **Lincolnwood District 74** – were the presenters.

Another session presented by staff from **THSD 214** was titled “STEM for ALL: Providing Access to Students of All Ability Levels.” It explored how a diverse school, Wheeling High School, has transformed itself into a STEM for ALL success story, with a mission to provide students of all ability levels access to the new technologically literate economy. Staff members Jeff Jerdee, Lazaro Lopez, and William Dussling presented the session.

Two IASB staff members were among the conference attendees: Executive Director Emeritus Michael D. Johnson, and Deputy Executive Director Michael L. Bartlett.

NSBA's T+L Conference is open to all educators whose public school districts are members of their state school boards associations.

THSD 214 was also the recipient of the 2010 Salute Trailblazer Award honoring the use of technology to promote student achievement.

The award recognizes extraordinary new accomplishments of districts previously honored through the association's Salute Recognition Program. THSD 214 was honored with a TLN Salute in 2000 for their robust technology program. Reviewers felt the district's more recent focus targeting technology solutions to address the learning challenges experienced by student groups identified by No Child Left Behind warranted the additional recognition as a Trailblazer.

District 214 uses a Digital Learning Lab to accelerate the progress of students who are not fluent in English. The technology department tracks students who earn struggling grades each week, and sends automated phone calls and letters to notify the parents.

The 12,400-student district boasts a 2:1 computer-to-student ratio, and an ongoing replacement program ensures that the technology stays current. Students contribute to wikis, write blogs, create YouTube videos, and engage in a wide variety of other interactive online activities.

In addition, two of the district's high schools host state-of-the-art robotics programs, and students have the option of taking Java, A+ Certification and Cisco Networking courses.

“Although computers in classrooms are common today, District 214 was far ahead of the curve in making technology a priority,” said Ann Flynn, NSBA's Director of Education Technology.

For more information, see: <http://www.nsba.org/tl/>.

Over 400 board members receive awards at fall division dinner meetings

IASB handed out well over 400 school board member awards at division dinner meetings this fall to board members from throughout Illinois, 100 more awards than last year. Many board members received awards for reaching Level I (97 award winners) and/or Level II (64 winners), both awards that precede the MBM status.

A total of 74 individual board members achieved Master Board Member status for the first time this past year, and 215 were recognized for maintaining their MBM status.

IASB strives to recognize and honor school board members for the time and effort they devote to self-improvement and leadership activities in various IASB and/or NSBA activities within and beyond their local districts.

Awards were handed out at division meetings this fall to recognize the service and participation of school board members in various IASB and/or NSBA activities inside and outside of their districts. Each of these activities is assigned from 5 to 30 Master Board Member credits, depending upon the time commitment involved. Credits

are cumulative and individuals are recognized at different milestones as they acquire these points.

Individuals receiving the Level I designation have accumulated at least 60 credits. Those receiving the Level II designation have 130 credits or more. Individuals reaching the 200-credit level receive the Master Board Member designation. Thereafter, the MBM designation is maintained by accumulating 50 additional credits each year.

Growing participation in the program has been observed through IASB's Members-Only website, <http://members.iasb.com>. That is the place where program participants can go to view participation in relevant activities, and track their progress in the program.

The pertinent forms and individual database information can be found on the Members-Only site under the tab, "Your IASB Involvement" at the top of the home page.

Forms are available for each school year going back to 1999-2000 and are provided in portable document format (PDF).

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

December 1 – Central IL Valley Division Winter Governing Committee Meeting, Jonah's Seafood House, East Peoria

December 1 – Abe Lincoln Division Winter Governing Committee Meeting, IASB, Springfield

December 2 – Blackhawk Division Winter Governing Committee Meeting, The Cellar, Geneseo

December 9 – Two Rivers Division Winter Governing Committee Meeting, Lonzerotti's, Jacksonville

January 4 – Shawnee Division Winter Governing Meeting, Bennie's Italian Foods, Marion

January 4 – Kaskaskia Division Winter Governing Committee Meeting, Cunetto's Restaurant, Greenville

January 19 – Professional Advancement - Seeking the Superintendency, IASB Springfield

For more current information, see www.iasb.com/calendar/