

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

December 2008 / Issue No. 680

2008 Joint Annual Conference sets attendance mark

3,668 board members take voluntary training

The IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference – already considered as the premiere school leadership event in Illinois – keeps getting bigger and better.

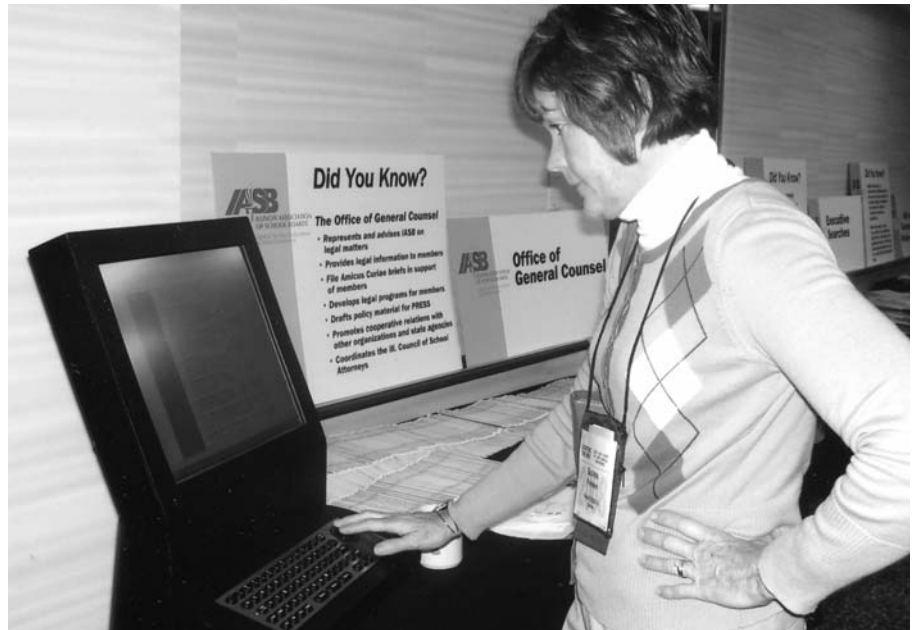
In fact, a new record for total attendance was set – again – as final figures showed that 12,261 people registered for the 2008 conference. That is 199 more than 2007, when registration topped 12,000 for the first time.

This was the 76th Joint Annual Conference of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators and Illinois Association of School Business Officials.

The event was headquartered at the Hyatt Regency Chicago, Nov. 21-23, 2008, and drew 4,897 guests, 3,668 school board members, 1,655 exhibitors, 681 superintendents, 525 school administrators, 100 board secretaries, 57 regional superintendents, 26 university staff, and, 19 attorneys, 12 past presidents, 10 state board officials, 9 service associates, and others.

Eighty-nine percent, or 773 of the state's 869 public school districts, were represented.

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Board member Gloria Farrar, of Field CCSD3, Texico, tries out IASB's newly launched Members-Only website at Conference.

IASB delegates reject concept of mandatory board member training

The Illinois Association of School Boards has voted to oppose any legislation that mandates training of school board members and to reject a proposed ban on teacher strikes.

Representatives from 360 Illinois school districts considered a total of 20 resolutions on various public school

management subjects at the 2008 Delegate Assembly, held Nov. 22 in Chicago.

IASB already encourages local boards of education to model continuous improvement by pursuing professional development and train-

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Drivers education funding, disbursements available now

An ISBE drivers education Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document has been updated and can be accessed at: http://www.isbe.net/funding/pdf/driver_ed_faq.pdf.

The updated document incorporates changes to the graduated license law (Public Act 95-310) that took effect on Jan. 1 and July 1.

The document also covers a broad range of driver education issues including student eligibility requirements for driver education, fee assessment and waiver procedures. Part 252 of the state administrative rules which governs the operation of public school driver education programs can be accessed at: <http://www.isbe.net/rules/archive/pdfs/252ark.pdf>.

Questions regarding the FAQ document or the driver education rules can be directed to Lisa Willhoit at lwillhoi@isbe.net or 217-782-5256.

State Board eyes special ed assistive tech services path

The State Board, the Illinois Assistive Technology Program, and a firm called UCP/Infinitec have partnered with Special Education Directors to study the delivery of assistive technology services. The intent is to maximize resources and continue to improve and provide effective services for students.

The state agency's first task is to collect data through a survey. Officials request that each school district or special ed cooperative identify one person who has knowledge specific to obtaining assistive technology services, (i.e., training, technical assistance, and equipment) to complete the survey. School districts are asked to send the name, telephone number and e-mail address for this individual to ISBE's Dawn Camacho at dcamacho@isbe.net.

'Grow Your Own' groups in state nurture hundreds of future teachers

In the not quite four years since the Grow Your Own Teacher Education Act became law in Illinois, 10 candidates have obtained their teaching degrees and nearly 500 more candidates are working toward degrees.

That's pretty amazing considering at least 74 percent have full-time jobs in addition to school, 55 percent have children at home and 72 percent are between 30 and 50 years old. And an associate professor of education from Harvard University says it may be time to scale up the GYO program all across the country.

Speaking to the GYO Statewide Learning Network Meeting in Chicago in November, Mark Warren of Harvard said school reform efforts usually focus on policy changes, like offering teacher bonuses and giving teachers release time to be mentors, or cultural changes, like parental involvement and the small schools movement.

"GYO," he said, "actually tries to do both."

Grow Your Own in Illinois, which had its roots in the *Nueva Generación* project in Chicago's Logan Square neighborhood, has grown in the past four years to include 16 consortia groups (eight in Chicago and eight in other Illinois communities). A consortium brings a community organization, a four-year higher education institution, usually a community college and a school district (s) or group of schools together as partners to support teacher candidates to finish their degrees and then teach in the neighborhood schools or communities where they've raised or are raising their own families.

According to a fact sheet on GYO, the initiative is scheduled for an increase to \$3.5 million dollars for fiscal year 2009, following two years of funding at \$3 million. However, the program has increased in that time from just under 400 candidates to 545 candidates, meaning some programs had to eliminate project-supported tutoring and ration courses, signifi-

cantly slowing student progress. It has created a waiting list of 175 people.

The increase for FY 2009 "does not allow any growth needed to reach the goal of 1,000 teachers (by 2016)," according to the fact sheet, especially as tuition rates increase and more GYO candidates make the move from two-year community college programs to four-year colleges where tuition is usually more expensive.

GYO is looking for support for \$4.5 million in the FY 2010 budget to fund the forgivable loans at increased tuition rates, allow access for those on the waiting list and develop programs in at least two additional low-income, high-need communities.

Consortia

Chicago: North Lawndale, Logan Square *Nueva Generación* and *Mae-stros sin Fronteras*, Auburn Gresham, Kenwood Oakland/Little Village, Chicago Lawn, Uptown/Edgewater/Rogers Park and Youth Connection Charter School

Illinois: Alton, East St. Louis, Peoria, Rockford, South Suburban, Southernmost, Springfield and West Central (Rock Island/Moline/Coal Valley)

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**

CONFERENCE *from page 1*

Popularity of the Joint Annual Conference stems from the opportunity it provides for board members and administrators to gain information and share insights about the full range of issues in school governance and Illinois education. The conference included 295 exhibits, 120 panel sessions, 27 “carousel” panels, 13 pre-conference workshops, three general sessions, a bookstore, delegate assembly, and other various learning and networking opportunities.

Attendance at the panel sessions, which totaled 8,434 over the three-day period, saw a large interest in several critical school issues.

Two of the 16 school finance panels drew 495 people to attend “School Finance Revenue for the Novice” and “Ten Most Common Mistakes in Collective Bargaining.”

Another 490 people attended two of the 21 panels on school governance and best practices, including “Involving Your Community in Major Decisions” and “What Would Lincoln Do.”

Two of the 11 school law panels attracted 435 people to learn more about “Blog Now, Pay Later: Legal Issues Concerning Social Networking Sites” and “Electronic Misconduct: A Legal Update.”

Also popular was the “Carousel of Panels” held on Saturday afternoon at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers. This event featured 27 panels rotating in three 30-minute sessions. More than 300 board members and administrators attended.

More than 360 school district representatives voted on 20 resolutions at Saturday’s Delegate Assembly. In addition to voting on IASB’s position statements, they also voted on officers, and heard reports from IASB President Mark C. Metzger and IASB Executive Director Michael D. Johnson.

Two days of professional development were also offered to board secretaries at the Swissotel Chicago. This year 382 elected officials and school employees attended nine training sessions, including time management, audits, elections, board packets, crisis management and other issues.

Attendance at the eight IASB pre-conference workshops held Friday topped 600. Two of the workshops – “Financial Oversight Essentials” and “Science, Math and Tech Education” topped 100 persons each.

The 2008 conference also featured five workshops for members of the Illinois Association of School Administrators and Illinois Association of School Business Officials, five tours of Chicago Public Schools, three general sessions and keynote speakers, a seminar for school attorneys, and various meetings of work-alike groups.

This year’s keynoters were Alan Blankstein of the Hope Foundation, futurist David Zach, and Joe Martin of RealWorld University. Other featured guests included State Superintendent Christopher Koch, ISBE Chairman Jesse Ruiz, and NSBA President Barbara Bolas.

Nine schools and school architecture firms received awards in the 2008 Invitational Exhibition of Educational Environments program, sponsored by IASB Service Associates. Awards of Distinction, Merit and Honorable Mention were given and 25 entries were on display at the conference.

Awards also went out for Risk Management, Outstanding School Board President, and Superintendent of the Year.

Two new IASB services were also introduced, including the electronic meeting and document management service BoardBook®, and the Association’s new Members-Only website. Handouts from many of the panel sessions are already posted at that site.

Also for the first time, certified Illinois teachers who were either registered conference attendees (board members) or registered guests were able to receive Continuing Professional Development Units (CPDUs) for their participation in the 2008 Joint Annual Conference. More than 120 teachers received such credits.

Additional coverage of the entire conference can be found at the IASB website, <http://www.iasb.com/jac08/>. The list of topics covered, including

links to each story, is published on that site, including:

- Conference Overview: Bigger and Better
- Delegate Assembly Report
- Thomas Lay Burroughs Award Winner
- Superintendent of the Year
- First Session Overview
- Second Session Overview
- Third Session Overview
- Board Secretaries Workshop
- 2008 Invitational Exhibition of Educational Environments Winners
- Comiskey Room Showcases New Services
- CPDU Credits
- Bingo winners

A gallery of photos from the entire conference will be available at a secure third party site, <http://momentshare.com/levyphoto/>. Viewing is free and photos will be available for purchase. Email address, event code (iasb08) and password (chicago) are required for access. The gallery will be posted in mid-December.

Images will appear in a low-resolution, “thumbnail” format. Viewers will be able click on any photo to see a larger image and can also choose to view the entire gallery in a “slide show” format, or to view each image in color, black and white, or sepia tone.

Prints are available in any size, from wallets to 11 by 14 inches. Costs are reduced from last year, and they now range from 75 cents for 4 by 5 prints to \$12.75 for 11 by 14 prints.

Photos can be ordered in any quantity or size, and all major credit cards can be used for payment. Typical delivery time is one to two weeks.

Questions concerning this year’s conference photos can be directed to Robert Levy Photography, 773/625-1741, or by emailing r-levy@sbc-global.net. Questions about photo orders can be emailed to Support@MomentShare.com.

The 77th Joint Annual Conference will be held Nov. 20-22, 2009 in Chicago.

Lines cast in newest extracurricular activity: fishing

Students across the state are steadily casting out new lines in search of a big catch, now that Illinois has become one of the first states in the country to adopt bass fishing as a high school sport. Teams have formed at more than 200 schools and a state championship will be held in April 2009.

The Illinois High School Association approved bass fishing as a high school sponsored sport last February and registrations for the inaugural tournament have greatly exceeded all expectations. In fact, bass fishing tournaments for Illinois high school students informally began Oct. 19 with a 15-boat tournament at Shabbona Lake.

A sectional tournament will be held on April 24 at designated lakes across Illinois. The state finals will be May 8 and 9. The IHSA even has a special bass fishing website: <http://TheFutureFishesHere.org>.

Classified as an activity alongside chess, debate, journalism, and music, bass fishing has drawn interest from coaches and administrators across the state.

“The level of support for a bass fishing tournament, from both our membership and from other non-school groups, has demonstrated clearly to our board that this event is one with potential tremendous value to our schools,” said IHSA Executive Director Marty Hickman. “Implementing such an activity will enable our schools to provide another opportunity for students that will enrich their educational experience and keep with the Association’s mission.”

The IHSA says participating students will provide all the equipment necessary to fish in the tournament, like the rods, reel, artificial bait, nets, and so on. But schools will be responsible to secure boats for the participants.

As for insurance, the IHSA will have its usual general liability coverage for both the sectional and state final tournament. Schools will be



Batavia USD 101 junior Adam Galardini catches the first keeper in high school tournament competition on Oct. 19.

responsible for insurance on any equipment, just like in any other sport or activity the IHSA conducts.

Because bass boats are not inexpensive, the state has sought corporate sponsors to support the program. And some schools have even enlisted local fishing clubs to provide the use of watercraft.

For the statewide tournament, schools will be allowed to enter as many as two boats, driven by adult coaches, with two students fishing from each boat at a time. Other than that, the rules are relatively lax, including this one from the IHSA: “There is not a designated season for bass fishing. A school could meet year-round with their students if they wanted and could schedule a contest with another school at any time.”

What makes schools so supportive of the sport? Supporters say that in fishing, size and athletic ability doesn’t matter as much as patience and determination. Many believe that the greater number of youth who are involved in fishing, the more they will want to protect the habitat and the environment in general.

For more information and a list

of FAQs about the Illinois High School Bass Tournament click on the link at: <http://www.ihsa.org/activity/bsf/faq.htm>.

Benefits of fishing club

Some experts claim that the benefits of a bass fishing club are far reaching, not only in the recreational aspect of the sport, but also in the academic realm. The following is a short list of the academic topics compiled by one Illinois school leader that may be taught through a bass fishing club:

Physics:

- Teach how different gear ratios in fishing reels work to help reel in line quicker or slower depending on the ratio. 6:3:1 v. 5:3:1 reels.
- Determine how the length of a rod changes how easy or hard it is to land a fish.
- Determine how different action rods have an affect on tackle action and hooking a fish.
- Learn to determine how different pound fishing line is rated for different size reels and how to determine which different pound test

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must be used for each of the different size fish that will be caught.

- Learn how a depth finder works to locate fish.
- Learn how a boat displaces water to make it float.
- Learn how a boat moves through water with ease.
- Teach about the friction and resistance caused by reeling in a fish.

Chemistry:

- pH of the water
- Pollutant effects

Earth Science:

- Geological makeup of the lake
- Moon phases
- Tide phases

Biology/Zoology:

- Learn how to handle a fish without causing any damage.
- Learn how to reintroduce a fish properly to the water to make sure it will survive.
- Learn how fish live/interact with their environment.
- Learn how and when fish spawn.
- Learn what attracts fish to different baits, lures, and colors.
- Determine what time of the day and what season to try to catch bass.
- Learn basic water safety skills.

Mathematics:

- Calculate total poundage of fish caught from weights taken when fish is caught.
- Learn how to calculate the total fishable area of a lake.
- Estimating depth of a lake by how deep the anchor or cast goes.

“We were looking at other activities we could offer students in our schools to get a different group of students involved in something at school,” explains Dave Gannaway, IHSA assistant executive director.

School finance referenda given nod at sub-par rate in November

Voters approved school finance referendums at a significantly lower rate than usual at the Nov. 4 general election, when four of nine school bond issues (a 44 percent approval rate) were passed. The lone education fund tax increase on the ballot was also defeated.

The passage rate for bond issues ranked considerably below the 59 percent average for all such propositions advanced since 1989. What is more, the 44 percent success rate obtained for building bond propositions is the lowest success rate seen for building bonds since November 1995.

Tax increase propositions typically fare less successfully, averaging only 36 percent since November 1989. That all the education tax hikes failed is not unheard of, however, especially when four or fewer tax propositions are on the ballot. That has been seen four times in the 39 elections held since November 1989.

The list of districts where bond issues were approved in November (all of them building bond propositions unless otherwise noted) includes: **East Aurora District 131** (working cash bonds); **Harvard CUSD 50**; **Mascoutah CUSD 19**; **Warren Township High School District 121**, Gages Lake; and **Warrensburg-Latham CUSD 11**.

The amount of these successful building bond issues ranged from a low of \$12 million in Warrensburg-Latham to a high of \$55 million in Mascoutah. The Warrensburg-Latham bond issue, estimated to cost taxpayers an additional \$150 per year on a \$100,000 home, will be used to pay for improving the sites of and alter, repair and equip the middle school and high school. Construction could be under way as soon as next summer.

Voters in the Harvard district, located in McHenry and Boone Counties, said yes to acquiring and improving a site for school purposes, and building a new elementary school building thereon. The voters agreed to issue building bonds in the amount

of nearly \$21 million.

The lone successful working cash proposal, which won approval in East Aurora District 131, hinged on voters approving a \$32 million referendum proposed by the district to get it back on budget by 2010. It was a feat, said school board member Juanita Wells, that has not been seen since 1993 — and even back then, the operating fund referendum passed by fewer than five votes out of about 5,000 cast. This time around, though, the referendum won approval by almost 1,900 votes out of more than 11,000 cast, for a 57 percent approval rate.

Besides bond issues and tax propositions, voters approved one of the two school district consolidation questions on the ballot. Local voters said yes to combining **Aledo CUSD 201** with **Westmer CUSD 203**, in the counties of Henderson, Mercer, and Rock Island. But voters narrowly rejected a plan to join **Meredosia-Chambersburg CUSD 11**, in Brown, Cass, Morgan and Pike Counties, with two other school districts: **Triopia CUSD 27**, in Cass, Morgan and Scott Counties, and **Virginia CUSD 64**, in Cass and Morgan Counties. The latter plan passed in most areas, but was rejected in one of the three school districts involved.

Another form of tax change on the ballot involved an increase in the Property Tax Extension Limitation Law (PTELL) limiting rate. Three school districts — **Diamond Lake District 76**, Mundelein; **Ridgeland District 122**, Oak Lawn; and **Ridgewood Community High School District 234**, Norridge — asked voters for permission to raise the “tax cap” rate. Only the Diamond Lake proposal passed, and that by just 45 votes, 1,489 to 1,444. The measure approves a .44 percent increase above the limiting rate for levy year 2007, “equal to 3.119 percent of the equalized assessed value of the taxable property therein for levy years 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011.”

Friedman is 'superintendent of year,' he urges patience

Not many superintendents can match the endurance or tenure that Mark Friedman has enjoyed as chief of **Libertyville SD 70** for the past 17 years. His career was celebrated Sunday, Nov. 23, when he was awarded the Illinois Superintendent of the Year honors from the Illinois Association of School Administrators.



Mark Friedman

"I guess if you hang around long enough," Friedman quipped, "these things are going to happen."

That remark, attributed to the late author and Pulitzer Prize winner Studs Terkel, set the tone for his own comments after receiving the award. The event took place at the third general session of the 2008 Joint Annual Conference in Chicago.

Friedman was selected from more than 865 Illinois superintendents and will represent Illinois in the Nation-

al Superintendent of the Year Recognition during the American Association of School Administrators (AASA) National Conference in February 2009.

Friedman, who has also served as an administrator in Lincolnshire and Itasca schools, said that superintendents are "sometimes acknowledged for their hard work and sometimes taken for granted. When things go well, they are celebrated; when they don't go well, they are blamed. Over time, these things even themselves out."

By working together, he continued, the superintendent, board and community are winners. "I urge you to work with and support your superintendent in good times and bad, and give them time to be successful," he said.

Libertyville District 70 is a high-achieving system of five schools, kindergarten through eighth grade, with 2,650 students and 320 employees. During his tenure with District 70, four out of five schools have been awarded the National Blue Ribbon

Award, with one school winning the honor twice.

A founding member of the IASA School for Advanced Leadership, Friedman has been an adjunct faculty member at National-Louis University and North Park University. He is also a trainer and presenter for the Illinois Administrators Academy, and a member of the National-Louis University Reading Advisory.

He is retiring at the end of the current school year.

The award was presented to Friedman at the third general session of the Conference on Sunday, Nov. 23, at the Hyatt Regency Chicago. Robert Gillum, superintendent at Ball-Chatham CUSD 5, and president of the Illinois Association of School Administrators, presided.

Gillum encouraged board members in attendance to support professional development for school leaders. "Hope, promise and opportunity is public education. But it requires compassion and nurturing leadership. Our job is to model," he said.

Suburban board member Zendol wins board presidency award

A long-time suburban school board member was honored as this year's Thomas Lay Burroughs Award winner as the outstanding board president of the year at the 2008 Joint Annual Conference.

Joanne Zendol, **Berwyn South SD 100** board president, reflected on a 20-year career serving a district of 3,900 students, with 400 staff, in eight schools. Her comments echoed what many board members face throughout Illinois: overcrowding, low-income and ESL populations, students being raised by single parents or grandparents, periodic crisis and tragedies, older buildings, lack of funds, etc.



Joanne Zendol

"We keep doing what we do best – teach children – just like you do. Just like Mr. Burroughs and many of you, we do what we do to make public education the best it can be with what we have and have to deal with. It's all about children first."

The Burroughs award is given annually to recognize outstanding public school board presidents. ISBE created the award in 1991 to honor the late Thomas Lay Burroughs, who served as chairman of the State Board of Education and the Board of Education for the Collinsville School District. The award recognizes extraordinary educational leadership at the local level, with leadership:

- on behalf of improved student learning and educational excellence;
- in resolving a crisis or major difficulty; and
- on behalf of equal education oppor-

tunities.

ISBE board chairman Jesse Ruiz presented Zendol with this year's prize, noting that she also helped to start the South Berwyn Education Foundation, which has raised more than \$625,000 in 18 years.

Zendol, who is also known for her sense of humor, thanked her board and school staff, and her family. She lamented the absence of one daughter, who had to work that weekend at Macy's because it's the busiest sales weekend of the year.

"But this is the biggest award, Julie," she joked.

Zendol, who also serves on the IASB board of directors, representing the West Cook division, referred to board membership as "servant leadership."

"I love what I do...we all do, or we wouldn't be here," she said.

IASB's 2009 Leadership Conference to detail '20% Challenge' on training

It is not too early for IASB leaders to plan to attend the association's 2009 Leadership Conference, to be held at the downtown Hyatt Regency Chicago on Feb. 27-28.

The Saturday morning agenda at the 2009 event, on Feb. 28, will briefly cover what the IASB staff has been doing over the past year and will be doing over the next few months to increase marketing efforts for new board member workshops.

Specifically, attendees will learn what has been done to upgrade workshop offerings, and to provide new services for new board members and new board teams.

But the primary work of the morning will revolve around an opportunity for IASB leaders to think and talk with division leaders from across the state about what role association leaders can play in encouraging greater participation. The session will provide time for division leadership teams to develop a unique plan for meeting the "20% Challenge" in their division of IASB.

In 2007 there were 1,308 new school board members elected in Illinois. Of that number, 32% attended a "Basics of Governance" workshop and 28% a "Basics of School Law and

Finance" workshop. IASB's goal is to increase those percentages by 20% in 2009 and the association needs the help of IASB's membership and division leadership to successfully accomplish that goal.

New board member training helps newly elected board members more quickly become contributing members of a highly effective board team. Additionally, the more participation in voluntary training, the better

the case that can be made against mandatory board member training. So what can be done, at the association and division level, to encourage participation?

"This is an opportunity for elected officers and leaders in the association, and each division, to make a direct contribution to the school boards in their division and across Illinois in their pursuit of 'excellence in local school governance,'" said IASB Associate Executive Director Angela Peifer, who heads up the association's Board Development/TAG program.

In addition, an inspirational speaker and a special Chicago schools tour will be on the agenda at the 2009 Leadership Conference. Association leaders will receive invitations to this annual leadership event.



"Dad, I don't qualify for financial aid, but the dean offered to find YOU a second job!"

NEWS FROM IASB

IASB to mail Constitution and position statements soon

Upcoming IASB mailings will include the 2008 IASB Constitution and Position Statements booklet. But what is it, and what does it mean?

Both the IASB Constitution and the Association's official position statements are products of the IASB Delegate Assembly (for details on action at this year's Delegate Assembly, see story on p. 1). 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, which provide major policies for the Association and establish an official stance on legislation and related matters of public policy.

IASB launches Members-Only website to aid members

IASB has officially launched its Members-Only website. You will need your seven-digit member ID number to log in. Find it on all IASB mailing labels.

To visit the website and log on, look for the log-in drop-down menu on the upper left corner of the IASB home page: <https://www.iasb.com/>.

For more information on this service, visit the Member-Only website: <https://www.iasb.com/press/memonly.cfm>.

Help keep IASB member information fully up to date

Has your local school board recently experienced board turnover, or has a school board member changed address? Send current information to Records Manager, or call IASB's Janice Kidd at ext. 1142.

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ing opportunities. But supporters said volunteer school boards should not be subject to training requirements that are not imposed on other elected governmental bodies.

“Why are we being told what to do by the state?” asked Andrew Johnson, board president of **Wheaton Warrenville District 200**, which sponsored the resolution. “Why is it just us?”

To the extent the state does impose school board training, supporters also suggested that the state should continue to look to IASB as the primary provider of such training.

The issue of mandatory school board member training has been prominent in the Illinois statehouse over the past two years, as school accountability measures have been discussed in conjunction with any school funding reform proposal. Until now IASB had adopted no position statement directly addressing such mandatory training.

In fact, school board members already receive more voluntary training than any other category of elected official in Illinois. According to the IASB annual report for FY 2008, 4,064 board members attended IASB training or meeting events this fiscal year, including 726 board members who attended three or more such events; 327 board members who earned Master Board Member credits; and 462 who are IASB LeaderShop Academy members. The annual conference itself last year drew 4,438 board members and superintendents.

But if school board members must have a mandatory training provision, advocates said the same rules should also apply to elected county board members, city councilmen, mayors, park district and library trustees, state legislators, and state constitutional officers.

Delegates also adopted a related resolution calling for IASB to evaluate any school funding reform plan more negatively if it is tied to mandatory training of local boards of education. This resolution was also submitted by Wheaton Warrenville.

In a very close vote, district representatives also voted to reject a resolution calling for an outright ban on teacher strikes. The resolution, submitted by **Huntley CSD 158**, called upon IASB to lobby lawmakers to prohibit strikes by all public school employees. It failed, 157 to 180.

The rationale for the resolution began with the assertion that, much like police and fire service, a local public school system is a taxpayer-funded entity essential to the stability and growth of its community. Under no circumstances are police officers or fire fighters permitted to strike, even if they are working without a contract. Supporters said adding a new provision in state law to prohibit teacher strikes makes sense for reasons of social stability and community welfare.

An IASB committee that reviews all submitted resolutions had recommended this proposal prior to the delegate voting. Committee members noted that in most states that already have a strike prohibition, there have been many other “trade-offs” included when enacting the strike prohibition (i.e., mediation, arbitration, scope of bargaining contracts). But in Illinois currently there is no real disincentive for a bargaining unit to strike because all school days and teacher pay are recovered.

Nonetheless, some delegates said they voted to reject the proposal out of concern for the many school boards that have worked hard to cultivate a positive working relationship with their teachers’ union.

“We have worked very hard with the IEA and IFT [unions] to develop a good relationship,” said Cyndi Dahl, a board vice president from **Darien District 61**. “I sat in a group session with the members of the Illinois Education Roundtable recently, where there were 25 education groups all working together.”

Also speaking against a strike ban was Karen Carney, a board member from **School District U-46**, Elgin. “Teachers and board members make

our best strides when we work together. It is hard to walk away from somebody you respect,” she explained.

A total of 20 resolutions were considered at the Delegate Assembly; 12 of which were new proposals and eight others that amended or reaffirmed existing positions (see the outcome of the resolutions voting at: <https://www.iasb.com/jac08/resolutions.cfm>).

Another proposal drawing comments from school board members was the resolution supporting rapid development and implementation of an appropriate test for those students who are classified as English Language Learners (ELLs). Supporters said the resolution is aimed at providing meaningful data to guide ELL instruction and improve student learning.

“Like others, our district was damaged by removal of the IMAGE exam because our schools were more likely to not make AYP as a result,” said Ken Kaczynski, the board president of School District U-46, Elgin. Kaczynski was referring to the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English or IMAGE exam. He said that the lack of an effective IMAGE replacement test was the main reason why many schools in Illinois fell short of meeting federal standards for Adequate Yearly Progress under the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

He spoke in support of a resolution submitted by **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200** that called for pushing state education officials to contract with a national testing company to develop a statewide assessment exam to test ELL students annually against state learning standards. The tests would be designed to meet the requirements of NCLB.

More than one resolution was adopted on the subject of English Language Learners (ELL). Related resolutions were approved, as well, that would:

- support legislation to modify the state’s required ELL student assessments so testing does not go beyond

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what is required by federal law, and to prohibit any expansion of such student assessment without legislative approval

- amend the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act to permit alternate assessments and other appropriate measures for ELLs, including but not limited to providing directions and questions in the student's most fluent language
- ask the legislature to pass legislation to amend the state law to make Transitional Bilingual Education optional and not mandatory

Supporters of the latter plan said that while the mandated approach is effective, educational research also supports alternative programs, including those with significant English-based components, which are equally effective in teaching ELL students.

Before voting on resolutions the delegates received reports on the year just passed from IASB President Mark C. Metzger, and from IASB Executive Director Michael D. Johnson. Metzger noted that attendance at the 2007 Joint Annual Conference totaled more than 12,000. He recalled the launch in February of a valuable new Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Workshop, which the board of directors attended during IASB's 2008 Leadership Conference. He reported that he also attended the National School Boards Association's 2008 conference in the spring, where he was elected to serve on that association's board of directors.

Metzger also noted that Illinois schools received a funding increase from the state legislature in the spring, at a time when few other state spending categories saw any increase.

Johnson, in a written report, also stressed this point. "While the funding increases have not always been as much as education needs or deserves, education funding has consistently fared better than any other part of the state budget," he wrote.

The executive director said this success with legislative funding hap-

pened "largely because IASB members have been so responsive in communicating with local legislators about school finance issues and reinforcing, in a practical way that legislators can understand, how decisions on school funding impact local schools."

Johnson also touched upon several significant new services IASB made available in the past year, which he said are all designed to meet the increasing demands on school districts.

Officers also re-elected

IASB's Delegate Assembly voting also included election of officers for the coming year:

Metzger was re-elected as President of IASB for a second one-year term. He has been a member of the **Indian Prairie CUSD 204** Board of Education since 1991. He has served as president, secretary and committee chair of every committee of his local board. He previously served on the IASB nominating committee and as an Alternate Delegate to the 2004 NSBA Delegate Assembly. He is frequently an invited adjunct presenter at IASB LeaderShop offerings and holds both LeaderShop Academy membership and Master Board Member status, both maintained since 1997.

Joseph Alesandrini was re-elected by the IASB delegates to serve as Vice President. He is president of the **Pekin CHSD 303** Board of Education, and has served as director of the Central Illinois Valley Division of IASB since 1997. He had served as treasurer of IASB prior to becoming Vice President last year. He also chaired IASB's audit committee in 2007, and he presently chairs the resolutions committee.

Districts are encouraged to draft and submit resolutions for the 2009 Delegate Assembly. Deadline for submitting proposals is June 24. For more information, districts should contact their division resolutions chairpersons or Ben Schwarm, IASB associate executive director for advocacy and governmental relations.

Superintendents urged to attend final seminar on IASB search program

An intensive one-day seminar to be held Jan. 14 at IASB, Springfield, is designed to assist persons seeking employment as a superintendent. Limited to current superintendents, the seminar will describe the Illinois Association of School Boards' Superintendency Search process in detail.

Presentations and written materials are designed to aid participants in evaluating and improving their opportunities for professional advancement. Topics to be covered will include:

- The Search Process: board and consultants
- Vacancies: where they are, how to find them, projections, brochures
- Job Strategies and Ethics
- The Portfolio: letter of application, resume, philosophy, statement of accomplishments, transcripts, references, placement papers
- Interview Process and perspective from new superintendent
- Contract Process: assessing the offer and review of the employment contract

Presenters will include: Donna Johnson, director, and Douglas P. Blair, senior director, Tom Leahy and Dawn Miller, consultants, Executive Searches, IASB; and Brent Clark, executive director, IASA.

The seminar is scheduled from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuition is \$80 per person, which includes printed materials, rolls, coffee and lunch. Lodging is not included.

Registration will be accepted in the order received, as space is limited. Registration is requested two working days prior to the seminars. Cancellations will not be accepted after that time. Confirmations will be sent one week prior to the event.

For questions about these seminars, phone IASB, ext. 1118 or 1217.

Voters snub eight of nine county sales tax plans

Deep recession seen as the primary cause

All school districts located in Cass County will benefit from a countywide referendum on sales tax propositions earmarked exclusively for school facility purposes. The school districts to benefit from a one-cent increase in the sales tax countywide are: **Beardstown CUSD 15**, **Virginia CUSD 64**, and **A-C Central CUSD 262**, Ashland.

The sales tax proposition was one of nine such countywide referenda on the ballots this fall, but the other eight plans were voted down. Sales tax propositions for schools were also held in Adams, Calhoun, Cass, Champaign, Iroquois, Kankakee, Marion, Pike, and Whiteside County. The earmarked sales tax for schools is allowed under a new state law that took effect in January. Under the law, revenue from the new one-cent-on-the-dollar sales tax will benefit facilities for all school districts in the county where such questions win voter approval.

It appeared that the deep economic recession made this fall a poor time to raise sales taxes. Voter ration-

ale and the national economic downturn were the subject of one of this year's panel sessions ("School Funding and Reforms: Hand in Hand or At Odds?") at the 2008 Joint Annual Conference.

Brian Gaines, a professor of political science from the University of Illinois, discussed what citizens think of Illinois government. One question in a poll he recently conducted was public funding of schools. The least popular approach with citizens, the poll showed, was changing the property tax structure of funding. The next was sales tax. The one approach most voters are interested in, he said, is redistricting and consolidation.

Perhaps that explains why voters in **Paris-Union District 95** and **Paris Crestwood CUSD 4** authorized their school boards to jointly operate a cooperative high school. The plan passed by an overwhelming 81 percent approval rate. That may also explain why voters approved one of two school consolidation plans on the ballot, combining **Aledo CUSD 201** with **Westmer CUSD 203**, and nearly passed the other consolidation plan for schools in the Triopia, Meredosia-Chambersburg and Vir-

ginia school districts. The Meredosia-Chambersburg and Virginia school districts voted yes, but Triopia school district voters rejected the issue.

In addition to finance issues, a number of miscellaneous questions directly impacting school districts also went before voters last month.

Voters approved four of six school district proposals seeking to elect school board members at large and without restriction by area of residence within the district. At-large voting will lift the current restriction that a number of members on the board must be selected from one congressional township in the school district. The four districts winning approval to elect board members at large were **Jamaica CUSD 12**, Sidell; **LeRoy CUSD 2**; **Scott-Morgan CUSD 2**, Bluffs; and **Waverly CUSD 6**.

Proposals for at-large representation were voted down in **Momence CUSD 1** and **Patoka CUSD 100**.

Also approved was a high school deactivation plan for **Crescent-Iroquois Community Unit School District 249** in Iroquois County. The plan was approved by a 467-154 vote and will result in students being sent to **Iroquois County CUSD 9**, **Iroquois West CUSD 10** and **Cissna Park CUSD 6**.

Con-Con defeat may be clouded by questionable wording

Voters rejected the proposal to rewrite the state constitution, saying no by a ratio of more than 2-1.

Supporters, including IASB, argued the Illinois State Constitution of 1970 needs to be changed because it lacks key provisions like a clarification about the way schools are funded by state government.

Opponents argued the constitution is fine and the problems are centered on the specific people in charge,

not on problems in the document itself. Every 20 years voters are required to consider whether a convention should be held to rewrite the constitution.

The measure requires the approval of either 60 percent of people voting on the specific question or 50 percent of those casting ballots in the overall election. Any changes recommended by the convention would have to be ratified by voters in another election.

This year's outcome may be clouded by questionable ballot language

that inappropriately informed voters the measure was rejected 20 years ago by 75 percent of those who voted on it.

Voters were supposed to receive a court-approved set of instructions telling them to ignore the language on the ballot. But that did not happen in some cases, including Kankakee County.

Convention plan backers said those complications may prompt a full-scale court challenge. But the first such challenge was dropped.

N NEWS HEADLINES

Bellwood (Nov. 18, *Chicago Sun-Times*) Earn A's and B's; get free college. That is the scholarship challenge for 22 sixth-graders from Bellwood SD 88. The students say it's the chance of a lifetime. If they can get all A's and B's throughout middle school and high school, stay out of trouble and graduate, they'll earn a college scholarship worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to Concordia University in River Forest. Fifth Third Bank is sponsoring the program, which includes free tuition, room, board and books at Concordia, where tuition is nearly \$30,000. It's likely to cost substantially more when the kids start college, around 2015, although Concordia plans to offer a steep discount. Organizers are trying to create a light-house effect, where the interventions will ripple out across the school district and the nation.

Carbondale (Nov. 10, *The Southern Illinoisan*) Some local educators say the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act is deeply flawed and in need of significant change. Carbondale Community High School District 165's NCLB coordinator Virginia Appuhn said part of the flaw of NCLB is in its use of subgroups, which represent sets of 45 or more students who compromise a minority such as special needs or low-income students. If any subgroup falls short of its AYP target, an entire school falls short of NCLB goals. School leaders agree progress is being made on meeting AYP goals around the state, but many say it is largely in spite of NCLB and not because of it.

Carpentersville (Nov. 14, *The Daily Herald*) Charter school teachers have won their appeal in an effort to form a union at Pingree Grove, a charter school run by Northern Kane Educational Corp. A state panel ruled Nov. 13 that the panel – the Illinois Educational Labor Relations Board – has authority over the charter school.

That decision clears the way for the Illinois Education Association (IEA), the state's largest teacher's union, to represent teachers at the school. The union is also trying to represent bus drivers at CUSD 300, Carpentersville, but it could lose out to the Teamsters, which beat the IEA in a union election last month. The results of that election have not yet been resolved.

Elgin (Nov. 10, *Chicago Tribune*) Students at Highland Elementary School's lunchroom in School District U-46, Elgin, are getting excited about eating fruits and vegetables. In May, when Congress approved the long-delayed 2007 Farm Bill, more than \$1 billion was allotted over the course of five years to provide fresh fruit and vegetables to selected schools nationwide. Highland is one of eight Chicago-area schools participating, receiving a \$25,000 grant. Each day, between 9:30 and 10:30 a.m., the 500 Highland students take turns parading by the tables to pick out a fruit or vegetable snack to eat in their classrooms. "More than 40 percent of our students in Illinois are low income," said Matthew Vanover, a spokesman for the ISBE. "This is an opportunity for them to get healthy food they wouldn't get at home."

Decatur (Nov. 10, *Decatur Herald & Review*) When the Decatur District 61 school board approved service learning as a graduation requirement in June few would have guessed how many students would embrace the idea. High school students are required to do 24 hours of community service, beginning with this year's freshmen. Sophomores are required to perform 18 hours, juniors 12 hours and seniors six hours. Many students say they would volunteer even if it were not a requirement. Most students are on track to meet their requirement, educators say.

Madison (Nov. 12, *Belleville News-Democrat*) A threatened lawsuit is

just the latest altercation between the employees and administration of Madison CUSD 12. Two Madison teachers are suing the district after they were placed on remediation on charges of sexual harassment. The pair is suing the district for defamation of character, though the lawsuit has not yet been filed.

Mundelein (Nov. 13, *Chicago Tribune*) "Kids-free" developments designed for older adults are adding revenue without enrollment gains in some suburban Chicago-area school districts, including Mundelein ESD 75. In the north suburban community of Mundelein in Lake County, a 700-unit development for residents age 55 and older opened about a year ago, and another 150-unit senior development is scheduled to break ground this winter. Housing that prohibits families with children has become an attractive option as rising costs put increased financial strains on school districts.

Normal (Nov. 10, *The Pantagraph*) Nearly 100 third-graders at Prairieland Elementary School in McLean Co. Unit District 5, Normal, now know how to properly fold a flag, and how pre-packaged Army meals taste. All of that is thanks to a U.S. Army sergeant's widow, a student teacher from Illinois State University, who helped arrange a visit from Army recruiters and craft activities and lessons about military values.

Peoria (Nov. 13, *Peoria Journal Star*) As school districts across the country feel the effects of an economic downturn and scramble to make adjustments, Dunlap CUSD 323, Peoria, is following suit by delaying possible construction of a fifth elementary school. Despite the biggest single enrollment jump in the district's history, a gain of 240 students this fall, the school board is taking a cue from the tanking economy and "siding with prudence."

State lottery sale plan ruled out, legality of leasing is in question

An opinion issued by the U.S. Department of Justice recently informed states that federal law bars them from privatizing lotteries. Such sales are a money-raising strategy eyed by several states, including Illinois, designed to help pay for investments in education, roads, bridges, and other purposes.

The federal agency's legal counsel determined that states may contract with private management firms to operate lotteries, but the officials stressed that the state must maintain control over significant business decisions made by the lottery.

In addition, the non-binding opinion stated that the management firm may not receive more than "a *de minimus* [minimal] interest in the profits

and losses of the business."

The list of states that have weighed long-term leases for their lotteries includes: Illinois, California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, and Texas. A bill passed the Illinois House this year, S.B.2595.

Gaming companies apparently are eager to lease state lotteries because they believe they can make them more profitable by selling tickets via cell phones, adjusting games being offered, and marketing sales more aggressively than governments have done.

Privatization has gained momentum as the economic slowdown reduces state and local tax collections that traditionally pay for building or upgrading schools, highways and commuter trains.

Though the new legal opinion is not binding, it does raise a red flag on some state plans.

A plan by Illinois state leaders to raise \$7 billion via a partial lease of the lottery might be at risk.

Privatizing state assets has a mixed record in the United States. Virginia and Florida are forging ahead, privatizing roads, bridges and tunnels, and Chicago recently leased Midway Airport for \$2.5 billion. But plans to privatize the New Jersey and Pennsylvania Turnpikes failed after proving unpopular.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 6 – Shawnee Division Winter Governing Meeting, Bennie's Italian Foods, Marion, 6:30 p.m.

January 6 – Kaskaskia Division Winter Governing Committee Meeting, Mabry's Rest., Greenville, 6 p.m.

January 14 – Professional Advancement Seminar: Seeking the Superintendency, IASB Springfield Office, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.

February 3 – Three Rivers Division Dinner Meeting, Renaissance Center, Joliet, 6 p.m.

February 7 – South Cook Legislative Breakfast, Hoover-Schrum SD 157, 8:30 a.m. - noon

February 24 – Shawnee Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Harrisburg CUSD 3, 6 p.m.

February 26 – Two Rivers Division Spring Dinner Meeting, tba

February 26 – Illini Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Rantoul City SD 137, 6 p.m.

February 27-28 – IASB Leadership Conference, Hyatt Regency, Chicago

February 28 – IASB Board of Directors' Meeting, Hyatt Regency, Chicago

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