

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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Delegates push for law to forbid school strikes



Delegate Assembly voting sets policies for IASB for the coming year at the Nov. 21 meeting in Chicago.

The Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) will seek and strongly support legislation forbidding public school employees from striking. The IASB Delegate Assembly has voted to push for such a law, while also working with state legislators, the Illinois State Board of Education, and teachers' unions to develop alternatives to striking, including mediation and binding arbitration.

Much like police and fire service, a community's public school system is a taxpayer-funded entity essential

to the stability and growth of that community, board members argued. Under no circumstances are police officers or fire fighters permitted to strike, even if they are working a contract. For obvious public safety reasons this law makes sense. That was the wording of the rationale that accompanied the resolution adopted by the IASB Delegate Assembly.

Shawn Green, a board member from **Consolidated SD 158**, Huntley,

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Joint Annual Conference sets attendance mark, up 118 to 12,379 people

The IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference – already considered the premiere school leadership event in Illinois – exceeded its own attendance record in 2009.

Final figures showed that 12,379 people registered for the 2009 conference. That is 118 more than 2008, and is the third consecutive year that attendance topped the 12,000 mark.

This was the 77th 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. 20-22, and drew 4,509 guests, 3,813 school board members, 2,117 exhibitors, 1,044 administrators, 671 superintendents, 132 board secretaries, 40 regional superintendents and 28 university staff, as well as service associates, school attorneys, state board officials, ROEs, and others.

Nearly 89 percent, or 769 of the state's 868 public school districts,

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for FOIA
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ACT honors ISBE for progress in prepping pupils for college

The ACT honored ISBE in October for dramatically boosting the college and career readiness of all students in Illinois public schools.

ACT presented an award to the Illinois State Board of Education at the "Recognizing Exemplary Achievement in College and Career Readiness" ceremony in Washington D.C. State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch accepted the ACT Systems of Excellence Award, which honors states that have increased the likelihood of success for students, their families, and educators through the use of coherent policies and initiatives that raise the expectations for and performance of all students.

"Illinois has a sharp focus on improving their student's college and career readiness," said ACT CEO and Board Chairman Richard Ferguson.

Since 2001 all Illinois students have taken the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) during their junior year. The knowledge and skills measured by ACT tests within the PSAE are closely aligned with state learning standards. The PSAE includes the ACT, a curriculum-based achievement exam.

Board honors Civic Mission of Schools Coalition for plan

At the last state board meeting the Civic Mission of Schools Coalition was honored with a resolution and endorsement of its recently released Civic Blueprint for Illinois High Schools.

The document that drew the honor promotes policy recommendations.

IASB's Director for Advocacy Cynthia S. Woods, a member of the coalition, was among those on hand to accept the honor and praise from ISBE.

Students show growth on all state exams, but more schools hit on AYP as bar rises

There was good news and bad news for Illinois schools based on the school performance data released recently by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

The good news is that Illinois students are improving overall on state standardized tests. The bad news is that hundreds of Illinois public schools have been placed on academic monitoring for falling short of performance targets under the federal No Child Left Behind law, according to state education officials.

The data released on Oct. 30 by the ISBE shows nearly 300 schools and districts were placed on improvement status for the first time this year, meaning they did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for two years in a row under No Child Left Behind (NCLB).

Again, Illinois schools are improving – the increases were generally less than 1 percent, with the highest gains in sixth grade math and eighth grade reading – but federal performance targets are increasingly stringent.

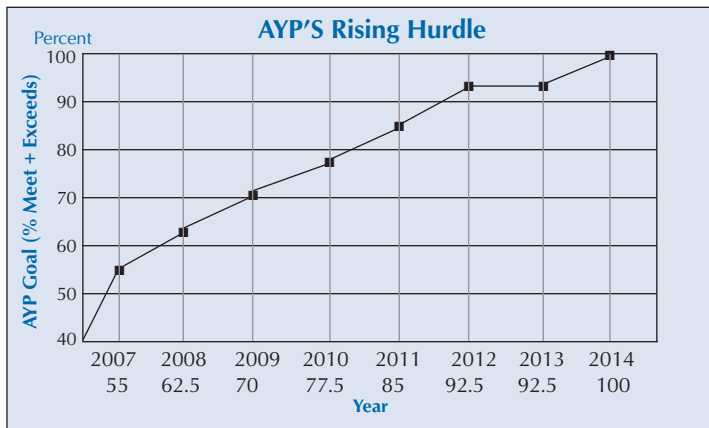
To make AYP more than 70 percent of a school's students had to meet or exceed state standards on testing this year, up from 62.5 percent a year earlier. The number of students required to make AYP is scheduled to rise to 77.5 percent next year under the federal NCLB law.

A total of 429 districts, or 49 percent, did not make AYP this year, up from 340 districts in 2008. For schools, 1,553 – 40 percent – fell short of adequate yearly progress, up from 1,200 in 2008.

What is more, 1,072 schools are listed on improvement status this year for coming up short of AYP for at least

two years, up from 815 last year. In all, 29 districts and 257 schools were newly placed on improvement status this year.

Illinois State Superintendent Chris Koch said the federal standards are now penalizing even those districts that are making gains in student performance.



"It doesn't mean that schools aren't improving, it just means that they aren't proficient," he said. "No Child Left Behind doesn't measure student learning and that's a flaw in the law."

Meanwhile, many schools that had once fallen short of the federal


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Illinois
SCHOOL BOARD
Newsbulletin

Illinois Association of School Boards

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James Russell, Associate Executive Director
Gary Adkins, Editor
2921 Baker Drive
Springfield, Illinois 62703-5929
(217) 528-9688
One Imperial Place
1 East 22nd Street, Suite 20
Lombard, Illinois 60148-6120
(630) 629-3776
www.iasb.com


ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

Legislature passes bills concerning education in veto session

Study of ISBE powers, AED mandate approved

The Illinois General Assembly adjourned on Oct. 30 after completing its fall veto session and is not scheduled to return to the Capitol until Jan. 12, 2010. No major changes were made in the Fiscal Year 2010 budget.

Lawmakers will consider budgetary amendments and possible new revenue sources next year, most likely after the Feb. 2 Primary Election.

Measures receiving final legislative action in this year's veto session included:

AED law clarification: SB 1371 (Crotty, D-Oak Forest) was approved to clarify that a school district is not responsible for providing an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) or a trained AED user at school if the activity taking place is not a school-sponsored event. SB 1371, which has been sent to the governor, makes clarifications to the law that requires school districts and other entities to have access to an AED at all outdoor physical fitness facilities.

The bill more clearly states that school districts only must provide the AED and trained AED user at outside athletic facilities if the activity is directly supervised by an employee (not maintenance or security personnel) of the school district and

specifically exempts any activity or program that is organized by a private or not-for-profit organization and supervised by a person who is not employed by the school district. So, if another organization – say a Little League baseball team or Junior Soccer League team – uses a school's baseball diamond or soccer field in the summer the school district is not responsible for providing an AED or a trained AED user.

More potential funding for school construction: SB 1514 (Viverito, D-Burbank), which could provide an avenue for additional funding for school construction, was also sent to the governor. It allows for the issuance of "Qualified School Construction Bonds" if the governor so directs. The bill includes authorizing language for school districts to apply for Qualified School Construction Bonds, which is a new program set up within the federal stimulus package.

The bond program uses the same tax credit financing mechanism as the relatively small Qualified Zone Academy Bond program (QZAB). The federal government will provide tax credits to bond holders in lieu of interest payments, and school districts will only be responsible for repaying the principal. This program will allocate 40% of funds to the 125 poorest school districts nationally. Other qualifications are unknown at this point, but there

is not supposed to be any match requirements attached to this program. It is also uncertain at this point to which agency school districts will apply for this program. The bill became Public Act 96-0828, effective Dec. 2, 2009.

ISBE duties review: SB 1882 (Cronin, R-Elmhurst) establishes a task force to explore and examine all duties of the Illinois State Board of Education and regional offices of education in order to determine which duties and responsibilities a regional office of education could more appropriately and efficiently deliver to school districts. The House voted to override the governor's amendatory veto and the bill becomes law in its original form without the governor's proposed changes. The bill is now law, P.A. 96-798.

Keeping Social Security numbers private: HB 547 (Pihos, R-Glen Ellyn) creates the Identity Protection Act and prohibits – with certain exceptions – local government agencies (including school districts) from publicly displaying or printing an individual's social security number. The bill also requires each local governmental agency to draft and approve an identity-protection policy within 12 months. The Senate voted to accept the governor's amendatory veto and the bill becomes law with the governor's changes.

Association set to mail out Alliance's *New School Laws* publication soon

IASB's annual *New School Laws* publication, to be mailed in January, is designed to notify school leaders about any newly adopted law or change in existing law that is important to local districts.

It summarizes bills adopted during the Spring Session of the Illinois General Assembly and signed into law by the governor. Compiled by the Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance, it will be mailed to superintendents, business officials and principals, as well as to each school board's

legislative liaison and president.

Laws are indexed by bill number, Public Act Number and title. Laws are also separated by subjects, such as Boards of Education, Personnel, Regional Office of Education, School Finance, School Safety and Health, State Board of Education, Students, and Taxation.

This list of laws is not exhaustive or detailed. After all, the publication is not intended as a substitute for either a current version of the Illinois Compiled Statutes or legal counsel.

The synopsis of each act is brief and may or may not encompass the full content or impact of the act. The synopsis is designed to call attention to statutory changes and additions that may merit further research.

Also included in the upcoming publication, where applicable, will be the IASB Policy Service (PRESS) information regarding new legislation. If a new law requires action by the school board, the corresponding PRESS Policy number will follow the public act information.

DELEGATE, from page 1

further explained that in any teacher strike “the harm to the community would outweigh any benefit to employees.” Green, who is employed as a police detective and is also a labor union member said, “I am proud to have a profession that is too important to go on strike.”

Jack Cantlin, a board member from **Serena CUSD 2**, said only 13 states presently allow school teachers to strike. Regarding the so-called “right to strike,” Cantlin said he remembers when teachers in Illinois did not have that right, adding that in a strike parents commonly ask “where are our rights to get our children back in school?”

Teachers have had the right to strike under Illinois law (115 ILCS 5/13) for nearly 30 years. But some school districts want to change the law, and legislation to ban teacher strikes will likely be introduced in the legislature next year, according to school management advocates. No bill to outlaw teacher strikes has come to a vote in recent sessions of the legislature.

Some IASB delegates who disagreed with the measure, which was passed by an overwhelming margin on a show of hands, 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’ unions.

That was the reasoning of Mike Kelly, a school board secretary and long-time board member in **Plainfield CCSD 202**. Kelly said his board has built a strong relationship with the teachers’ organization even after facing a contentious strike in 2001, and “I don’t want to create a split in that relationship.”

Also speaking against a strike ban was Karen Carney, a board member from **School District U-46**, Elgin, where the district has one of the largest teachers’ unions in the state. “I strongly urge you not to pass this,” she said. “You cannot legislate behavior. You can’t mandate that it can’t happen.”

The resolution, submitted by **Consolidated SD 158**, Huntley, amended a less strongly worded IASB position against the idea of strikes. The success of the proposal reversed the outcome of a similar resolution introduced at last year’s Delegate Assembly, which failed on a vote count of 157-180.

Credited with changing the outcome this time around was the persuasive floor debate, according to Mark C. Metzger, who presided over the Delegate Assembly in 2008 and 2009 as IASB president. This year’s debate prompted more than 15 speakers, and ended with two proponents urging

“The phrase ‘it’s for the kids’ is often used to justify anything, but in this case it fits.”

board members to “do what is best” for children of the state. Board President Guy Finley of **Round Lake CUSD 116**, among the last to speak, said: “the phrase ‘it’s for the kids’ is often used to justify anything, but in this case it fits.”

The vote against teacher strikes took place on the floor of the Delegate Assembly on Saturday, Nov. 21. Representatives from 375 Illinois school districts voted on this and 18 other resolutions on public school management topics at the 2009 Joint Annual Conference, held Nov. 20-22 in Chicago.

Assembled board members from throughout the state also voted to push for legislation to sharply limit the authority of state oversight panels that, according to some school board members, can undermine local control of schools, and to support softening the restrictions certain school districts face when seeking to choose school board members at large.

The issue of limiting the authority of state oversight panels was submitted by **Calumet Public SD 132** and was passed by an overwhelming margin. Guy Finley, from **Round Lake CUSD 116**, said districts are “alone

in the woods” when they’re going through the financial oversight process, and that it “needs to be clear how (local control and finances) comes back.” Round Lake is due to come out of ISBE’s financial oversight next year.

The issue of electing school board members at large in school districts that currently cannot do so has been advocated for years in those districts where there is a requirement in state law for a majority vote in each congressional township in order to move to an at-large election method. Until this vote, IASB had adopted no official position statement directly addressing the issue. The measure to ease a district changeover to allow electing school board members at large was submitted by **Greenfield CUSD 10** and was also passed overwhelmingly.

Of the 19 resolutions submitted by local districts, two were new proposals that passed. Six others approved were designed to amend or reaffirm existing positions.

Local member districts are encouraged to draft and submit proposals in early spring; the deadline this year was June 24. After a committee reviewed them and offered its recommendations, the Delegate Assembly voted on the resolutions, which, in turn, are heeded by IASB and allied school management lobbyists.

Delegates also voted to amend current IASB positions on several topics, including resolutions to:

- recognize and support the importance of the role of school counselors, psychologists, and social workers. Submitted by: **Township High SD 211**, Palatine
- choose a different federal inflation index, rather than the Consumer Price Index from one selected month as is now used, in calculating Illinois Property Tax Caps, choosing the index offering the best average indicator of inflation over time, thus lessening the unpredictability of tax-capped local resources. Submitted by: **Wheaton Warrenville**

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CUSD 200

- prevent any school building from being used as a polling place unless the safety of the children and staff will not be compromised and unless voters will be physically separated from students when the school is in session. Submitted by **Orland SD 135**, Orland Park

Delegates also voted to reaffirm two current IASB positions to:

- call for legislation that prohibits the passage of unfunded educational mandates, submitted by **United Township High SD 30**, East Moline
- call for a reaffirmation of Position Statement 5.05 calling for the repeal of the Prevailing Wage Act, submitted by **Jasper County CUSD 1**, Newton

School board delegates chose not to support a number of other proposed resolutions, including those that would have pushed for measures to:

- prohibit school districts from holding children back due to their age if academically capable. Submitted by: **Hoover-Schrum Memorial SD 157**, Calumet City
- include parts of a state-mandated exam in high school graduation requirements – as determined by the local school district. Submitted by: **East Peoria CHSD 309**, East Peoria
- create a task force to study public school funding with the goal of developing a more reliable financial foundation for educational opportunities for children. Submitted by: **Olympia CUSD 16**, Stanford
- reaffirm the mission of the IASB regarding the professional development of board members. Submitted by: **Dolton West SD, 148** Riverdale
- allow board of education members who offer services outside of the school district for which they serve as a board member to be allowed to provide those services to the school district they serve through the normal competitive bidding process. Submitted by: **Hoover-Schrum Memorial SD 157**, Calumet City

- allow board of education members to be reimbursed for lost wages for attendance at board functions such as conferences, workshops, emergency board meetings, etc. Submitted by: **Hoover-Schrum Memorial SD 157**, Calumet City
- cap administrator salaries, including salaries of superintendents, principals, assistant principals, business managers and directors at 50 percent of the original hire or contracted start date. Submitted by: **Hoover-Schrum Memorial SD 157**, Calumet City
- support the development and implementation of national K-12 learning standards. Submitted by: **Carlinville CUSD 1**
- recommend that all home-school students be required to take the same assessment tests as those required for public school students. Submitted by: **Carlinville CUSD 1**
- seek legislation that would promote the consolidation of all school districts into unit districts. Submitted by: **Barrington CUSD 220**
- change the Prairie State Achievement Examination (PSAE) into a criterion-based assessment emphasizing Illinois Learning Standards, and drop the norm-referenced ACT test component and scoring approach. Submitted by: **Palestine CUSD 3**

Before voting on resolutions the delegates received reports on the past year from IASB President Mark C. Metzger and from IASB Executive Director Emeritus Michael D. Johnson.

Officers elected

IASB's Delegate Assembly also chose officers for the coming year. Current vice president Joseph Alesandrini was elected president, and current treasurer Carolyn D. Brooks was chosen as vice president.

Alesandrini has been a member of the **Pekin CHSD 303** board of education since 1985, and is currently its vice president. He previously served as treasurer of IASB prior to becoming the association's vice president two years ago. He joined the IASB board of directors in 1997 to repre-

sent IASB's Central Illinois Valley division and has been active in Association audit, resolutions and executive committees. Alesandrini has also served as a delegate to the National School Boards Association.

Alesandrini thanked the delegation as well as his board, his superintendent and his family for their support and said the excellent leadership, both from the board and the staff, in the 14 years that he has served on the board of directors makes him feel he is "ready to hit the ground running."

Brooks has been a member of the **West Richland CUSD 2**, Noble, board of education since 1995. She is currently the board secretary and has previously served as board vice president. She chaired the association's audit committee in 2008, and has also served as an NSBA delegate.

Brooks, who had been singled out by speaker Mark Scharenbroich during the second general session for riding a motorcycle, was greeted with a "wings on the Harley" ovation from one of the delegates as she took the podium to accept her new position.

Districts are encouraged now to draft and submit resolutions for the 2010 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.

Korean War books distributed

The booklet "A Brief History of the Korean War," provided by the Illinois Korean Memorial Association, is currently being donated to Illinois High Schools, Jr. High Schools and public libraries at no charge. They will be delivered as long as funds permit. A space has been provided for school library stamps inside the front cover, and the booklets feature a tear-proof cover for durability. For information call 217/529-1443.

CONFERENCE *from page 1*

were represented.

The Joint Annual Conference remains extremely popular, despite the economic hardships facing school districts and individuals, because of the abundant learning opportunities it provides for board members and administrators.

Information and insights on a full range of issues in school governance and Illinois education were found at 222 exhibits, 112 panel sessions, 28 “carousel” panels, 13 pre-conference workshops, three general sessions, a bookstore, delegate assembly, and other various learning and networking opportunities.

In fact, this year’s panel sessions drew 9,648, an increase of nearly 15 percent, or an average of 86 persons per panel in the five panel time slots over three days. Attendance reached standing room only capacity at eight sessions.

Handouts from many of the panel sessions are available on the IASB Members-Only website at <http://members.iasb.com>. More than 75 handouts have been posted on the site. Panels are listed by date, title and the location of the panel presentation. To obtain them it is necessary to register on the website using your seven-digit Member ID number and last name. Your number appears on mailing labels of all materials sent out by IASB, and it begins with a “2.”

In this year’s panels, finance and funding was far and away the hot topic.

Two panels on collective bargaining – Ten Most Common Mistakes in Collective Bargaining and Fundamentals of Collective Bargaining – attracted 588 people. Another 390 attended two other finance panels – Communicating School Finance during Difficult Economic Times and Current Economic Conditions and how they Affect my District.

State finances and their expected legislative impact were also big draws.

Three of the largest were the 2009 Legislative Session Review, What’s on

the Fiscal Horizon, and Legislative Issues Impacting School Districts. Combined, 970 school leaders attended these sessions.

The single largest school law panel attracted 325 people on Saturday afternoon to learn more about FOIA Rewritten: with Transparency and Accountability for All.

Also popular again at conference was the “Carousel of Panels” event held on Saturday afternoon at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers. More than 300 board members and administrators attended the 28 panels that rotated in three 30-minute sessions.

School districts sent 375 representatives to debate 19 resolutions presented to board members at Saturday’s Delegate Assembly. In addition to voting on IASB’s position statements, they also voted on officers, and heard reports from newly elected IASB President Joseph Alexandrini and IASB Executive Director Emeritus Michael D. Johnson.

A separate strand of professional development for school board secretaries was held at the Swissotel Chicago. This year elected officials and school employees could attend as many as 12 different training sessions on various topics, including board meeting agendas and minutes, electronic board packets, tech-savvy secretaries, providing support for the board and superintendent, closed sessions, Illinois E-Pay, crisis planning, state student information systems, FOIA changes, difficult people, and personnel-related issues.

Attendance at the nine IASB pre-conference workshops held on Friday exceeded 800, which was the highest workshop turnout since 2001. Three of the workshops – School Board Leadership, Basics of School Finance, and Collective Bargaining – topped 100 persons each.

The 2009 Joint Annual Conference also featured 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 day-long seminar for school attorneys, and various meetings of work-alike groups.

This year’s keynoters were Jason Dorsey, who spoke about Generation Y, educator and producer Mark Scharenbroich, and humorist/author Steve Sobel. Other featured guests included state school board officials and NSBA President C.H. “Sonny” Savoie of Louisiana.

Nine schools and school architecture firms received awards in the 2009 Invitational Exhibition of Educational Environments program, sponsored by IASB Service Associates. Awards of Distinction, Merit and Honorable Mention were given and a total of 26 entries were on display throughout the conference.

Awards also were handed out for Risk Management, Outstanding School Board President, Superintendent of the Year, and Distinguished Service Award.

A new IASB service – LeaderShop Online Learning Center – was also introduced at the Association’s hospitality room, where visitors could talk, meet Association officers and staff, meet state board of education officials, and hear about the features of IASB services, including Board-Book®, the Members-Only website, and the Association’s school board policies online hosting service.

This was the second year that 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 2009 Joint Annual Conference. Nearly 160 teachers took advantage of the offer this year.

The 78th Joint Annual Conference will be held Nov. 19-21, 2010, in Chicago. Requests for Proposals and information for exhibitors will be posted in early 2010. Housing and registration packets will be mailed to districts in early June 2010.

Miller takes home first annual Holly Jack Award for school district secretaries

Janet Miller, a 15-year veteran of the Mt. Vernon School District 80 administrative office, was recognized as the first recipient of the Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award.

The award was created to recognize outstanding work by a school board secretary in memory of a long-time IASB administrative assistant, Holly Jack, who was instrumental in organizing the professional development now offered for board/district secretaries at Joint Annual Conference. Jack died in 2008.

"It was a pleasure to work with Holly," Miller said. "She was a remarkable woman and an inspiration to many."

Miller added that the information and networking opportunities for board secretaries at annual conference is a valuable resource, and it was Jack's leadership that resulted in the educational strand.

She credited her current superintendent Kevin Settle with challenging her to set high goals for herself and her former superintendent, Nick Osborne, for truly recognizing her potential as an administrative assistant.

Miller was chosen from among 22



Mount Vernon Dist. 80 administrative assistant Janet Miller receives the award from IASB's Executive Director Emeritus Michael D. Johnson.

applicants for the award and her selection was based on the criteria of performance, initiative, innovation, staff development, self-improvement, passion for public education and dedication.

Anna Lovern, IASB policy director, said many of the applicants were equal among the criteria, but that Miller also serves as a vital link between the district and community.

Lovern said the award honors Holly Jack's contribution and recognizes the service of local board secretaries. "We know what you do," Lovern said.

Huddleston wins Burroughs Award as top school board president from ISBE

Fred Huddleston, who has served 14 years on the Jasper County CUSD 1 board of education, has been named the Outstanding School Board President for 2009 by the Illinois State Board of Education.

Huddleston, who has served that entire time as his board president, received the Thomas Lay Burroughs Award at the 2009 Joint Annual Conference and was acknowledged for his long-time service as well as for his leadership in numerous areas.

"As a team we've accomplished a lot," Huddleston said as he accepted his award from Dr. Christopher Ward, ISBE vice chair, "as individuals, not as much."

Huddleston thanked his fellow board members and the administrators who have served the district during his tenure, current superintendent Ron Alburtus and retired superintendent Wayne Savageau, adding that a board president or a superintendent of the year would not look nearly as good without a cooperative board.

During Huddleston's tenure on the board, the district went through a consolidation that drew considerable opposition, Ward said in his introduction. Now, six years later, he said, even those opponents see the tremendous benefits to the district.

Huddleston and the Jasper County board also oversaw the revision of curriculum, addition of a required computer concepts course for all high school students, implementation of a new sex-ed curriculum at the middle school and an increase in overall test scores in the district from 67 percent "meets or exceeds" in 2002 to 80 percent in 2009.

The Burroughs Award for extraordinary leadership is named for the late chairman of the Illinois State Board of Education who also was president of the Collinsville CUSD 10 board.



Fred Huddleston

Conference photo gallery offers myriad remembrances of highlights of 2009 event

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 are available for purchase. User name (iasb09) and password (chicago) are required for access.

The site will not be active until the hundreds of photos are processed and posted. IASB will announce availability of the gallery as soon as it becomes available, along with instructions on how to access, view or order these photos.

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 various formats.

Those who wish can order their own prints. They are available at a reasonable cost in any size, from wallets to 11 by 14 inches. 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.

New-look BoardBook® features improved search function, 'quick view' feature, more

This month BoardBook® users will begin converting to an enhanced application that will streamline the preparation, distribution and publication of board agenda packets.

IASB began offering BoardBook® a year ago through a partnership with the Texas Association of School Boards. It is a web-based software application. Participating districts can use it to electronically distribute the agenda, post selected materials online and conduct paperless meetings.

There is no software to install and no set-up fees. Annual subscriptions include personalized staff training, customization to the school district, telephone support service, and online help features.

In developing a new look for this year, BoardBook® took many of the suggestions and requests that they had received from their over 500 users and added them to the application.

For board members, the agenda packet will appear the same, but an improved search function will allow them to locate a single document. A

new "quick view" feature will expedite packet viewing for those board members using slower dial-up connections.

Board agenda compilers (those putting the packets together) will be able to spell-check their materials and will enjoy many other requested features.

To accompany the new application redesign, a new logo and look have been developed for the program. The new logo's design reflects BoardBook's® ongoing focus on its users and their needs. Interlocking squares, resembling computer monitors, represent the connections that BoardBook® helps districts build among the board, staff and community.

Starting in October, current users were able to take advantage of daily online classes about the enhanced application. Training on the new version began in October, as well, and current subscribers will be converting to the new version in the next few months.

For more information, you may visit the website <http://www.board-book.org>.

Food allergy committee to draft guidelines with some school participation

A food allergy bill introduced in the spring, SB 152 (Garrett, D-Lake Forest), would have required the Illinois Department of Public Health to develop guidelines on food allergies that school districts would have had to adopt – all without school district input. Ultimately a legislative compromise was reached that would require that new guidelines will come from an ad hoc committee of the Illinois State Board of Education, with input from the state public health agency.

The Illinois Statewide School Management Alliance was concerned that the parents of children with allergies (perhaps in a loosely bound coalition) would have been writing much of the guidelines and might have included some untenable language for schools, said one school management lobbyist.

The Alliance negotiated with the sponsor and amended to the bill to require that the new guidelines would come from an ad hoc committee of the State Board of Education.

AYP from page 2

standards are now meeting them.

But given the declines in AYP compliance, Koch is calling for a re-examination of No Child Left Behind, whose goal is to have all students meet its standards by 2014.

Across the state, the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT) composite score for elementary and middle school students increased from 79.1 percent in 2008 to 79.8 percent in 2009, while the Prairie State Achievement Exam score for 11th-graders increased from 52.5 percent to 53 percent.

In elementary grades, the percent of kids passing was up on most reading and math tests. By eighth grade, more than 80 percent of kids passed those tests. By high school, pass rates plunged, down into the 50-percent range, and results varied wild-

ly.

Eleventh-grade reading saw the largest jump in its history — of 3.6 percentage points — to nearly 57 percent passing.

But 11th-grade math dropped to its lowest level since the ACT was tacked onto the Prairie State exam in 2001. This year only 51.6 percent of kids passed that math test.

By race, 18.6 percent of African-American students in the state passed 11th-grade math, along with 31.6 percent of Hispanics, 63 percent of whites and 76 percent of Asians.

Illinois has joined a growing number of states committed to developing a "common core" of learning standards, but the effort won't result in a voluntary multi-state or national test until at least 2013, he noted.

Schaumburg CCSD 54's Rafferty wins IASA award

Superintendent Edward F. Rafferty, leader of Schaumburg CCSD 54, was named the 2010 Illinois Superintendent of the Year at the 2009 Joint Annual Conference. The award is sponsored by the Illinois Association of School Administrators.

Rafferty was selected from among 868 Illinois superintendents and he will represent Illinois in the National Superintendent of the Year competition during the 2010 AASA National Conference in the spring. The National Superintendent of the Year Award will be announced at that conference and a \$10,000 college scholarship will be presented in the name of the winner.



Panel sessions like this one at the conference often filled up fast: Attendance rose 15 percent this year over 2008 totals.

Workshops set for January, February on law basics for school boards today

IASB will be presenting workshops on Jan. 25 (Belleville), Jan. 26 (Springfield), and Feb. 1 (Lombard) focusing on the legal requirements related to board work, called the Basics of Law on Board Meetings and Practices.

Because a board may take action only at a legally convened meeting, the workshop presents the meeting requirements contained in the Open Meetings Act and the School Code.

The workshop is for newly elected board members who have yet to attend a law session, but also very relevant to experienced board members and board presidents.

The workshop will review key legal duties of the board and the legal con-

siderations regarding records, conflict of interest, gift ban, fiscal oversight, etc. Participants will have an opportunity to get their questions on legal issues related to board work answered.

The workshop objective is to help school leaders understand the legalities that govern school boards to help them be more effective.

Tuition is \$185 per person, which includes materials and meals. Advance registration is required.

If you need lodging information for this workshop, call Judy Williams at 217/528-9688 or 630/629-3776 extension 1103. More information about the program is available online at: <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/basicsoflawbrochure.pdf>.

Seminar on Jan. 20 will explore seeking job of superintendent for current superintendents

An intensive one-day seminar to be held Jan. 20 at IASB's Springfield office is designed to assist current superintendents in the future regarding seeking employment as a superintendent. Limited to current superintendents, the seminar from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. will include a detailed description of the Illinois Association of School Boards' superintendent search process.

Presentations and written mate-

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

- The Search Process
- Vacancies
- Job Strategies and Ethics
- Portfolio, Interview, Contract

For questions about the seminar, phone Mary Torgler at 630/629-3776, ext. 1217.

NEWS FROM IASB

IASB to mail Constitution and position statements book

Upcoming IASB mailings will include the 2009 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 top 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 assembly, which provide major policies for the Association and establish an official stance on legislation and related matters of public policy.

New member district brings current membership to 856

IASB has added one school district to its membership rolls, with the addition of **Oakdale CCSD 1**. The district is located in the Egyptian Division where Dave Love is field services director. Membership totals include 856 member districts, and only 11 non-member districts, meaning 98.7 percent of Illinois school districts are members of IASB.

Help keep membership information up to date

IASB is appealing to member school districts to update Association membership records in order to ensure that new members or addresses will be added to the database. To update the records for your district, send current information to the Records Manager at IASB. For further information, call IASB's Janice Kidd at ext. 1142.

Freedom of Information Act compliance begins January 1

The re-write of Illinois' Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) resulted in many new requirements for school boards. Compliance with the new law begins Jan. 1, 2010.

The extensive changes to FOIA are a large concern among school officials across the state. The latest issue of the IASB Policy Reference Educational Subscription Service (PRESS) contained a rewritten FOIA policy and procedures, a revised policy on the Open Meetings Act (OMA), plus other material needing revisions after the legislative session.

IASB published the PRESS issue and made it available on the PRESS website for downloading in mid December.

Adopting an updated policy by Jan. 1 is a good goal, but it is not legally necessary, as long as the district complies with the revised FOIA on and after Jan. 1, 2010. A board may waive its policy requiring multiple readings of a policy before adoption if it feels the necessity to adopt a revised FOIA policy before Jan. 1. Otherwise, a board may wait to adopt the revised FOIA

policy until it has time to review it.

Complying with the revised FOIA is the bigger issue. PRESS material will make compliance easier but the board's attorney should be consulted for specific advice.

The Illinois Attorney General's office is aware of the concerns over whether evaluations are exempt from a FOIA request. It expects to release its position on this issue soon (before Jan. 1). Other compliance information is available from a Frequently Asked Questions publication concerning FOIA on the Illinois Attorney General's website at: http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/government/FAQ_FOIA_Government.pdf.

It will be updated about once a week based upon questions it receives. More information about FOIA and OMA is available on the agency's website:

<http://www.illinoisattorneygeneral.gov/index.html>.

In the meantime, school boards will need to make some appointments in December or early January. Amendments to the Open Meetings Act require

each board to designate at least one employee or member to receive training on compliance with OMA. And the board must submit the names of the designated individual(s) to the AG Office.

The designated individual(s) must successfully complete an electronic training curriculum administered by the AG Office by July 1, 2010. The OMA does not specify duties for the designated individual(s) who have received training but presumably they would assist the board in its OMA compliance efforts.

Similarly, the revised FOIA requires each board to also designate one or more officials or employees to act as its Freedom of Information officer(s). The Freedom of Information officer receives FOIA requests and issues timely responses among other duties. Each Freedom of Information officer must, by July 1, 2010, successfully complete an electronic training curriculum administered by the AG Office.

These and other requirements are covered more fully in the December PRESS issue.

School attorney believes new FOIA will impose added burdens, costs on schools

The comprehensive rewrite of the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) signed by the governor on Aug. 17 will mean "unfunded additional expense for public bodies" along with numerous additional burdens, according to Chicago attorney Heidi Katz, of Robbins, Schwartz, Nicholas, Lifton & Taylor, Ltd.

Katz told an audience of school attorneys who met before the 2009 Joint Annual Conference that the FOIA rewrite "expands and stiffens penalties for failing to comply with FOIA requirements." She summarized the major procedural and technical changes contained in the revised law.

Katz spoke at the 23rd Annual School Law Seminar on Friday, Nov.

20. The pre-conference event was sponsored by the Illinois Council of School Attorneys, an organization affiliated with Illinois Association of School Boards and the National School Boards Association.

In other action at the Friday law seminar, the members of the Illinois Council of School Attorneys heard welcoming remarks from their newly elected chairperson, Merry C. Rhoades, of Tueth, Keeney, Cooper, Mohan & Jackstadt, P.C., Edwardsville. An education law attorney since 1987 who advises clients on all facts of school law, Rhoades is perhaps best known for her work in the area of special education and student rights.

Rhoades has been a member of the Illinois Council of School Attorneys Executive Committee for 10

years, and is a service member of the Illinois Association of School Administrators. She also serves as a PRESS advisory committee member, and she is a frequent speaker for organizations such as the Illinois Association of Administrators of Special Education.



Merry C. Rhoades

Rhoades was also a presenter at a conference panel session on Saturday afternoon, "FOIA Rewritten: With Transparency and Accountability for All..." There she shared key insights, based on 20-plus years of experience in representing clients, on school district compliance with FOIA in Illinois.

NEWS HEADLINES

Canton (Nov. 12, *The Journal Star*, Peoria) A Title IX lawsuit against Canton Union District 66, which accuses the district of not treating boys and girls sports equally, appears to be in limbo after the school board recently voted against a proposed mediation offer. “We’re still in pending litigation,” said Superintendent Roy Webb. The Title IX suit was filed in May in Peoria’s U.S. District Court by parents of two female students, alleging the district treats athletic teams differently based on the gender of the athletes, including putting better sound systems in place at boys’ basketball games.

Cary (Nov. 8, *Northwest Herald*) The Cary District 26 school board has some key decisions ahead on the potential for a school closure and a referendum after receiving input from its finance committee. In October, Superintendent Brian Coleman recommended that Maplewood School be shuttered as part of a bid to reduce expenses. The district has been operating in the red for several years and faces a deficit of at least \$1.88 million at the end of the year. Enrollment also has dropped by more than 400 students since 2005. Finance Committee members have asked Superintendent Coleman to revisit several plans for closing a school.

Deerfield (Nov. 10, *Deerfield Review*) Deerfield District 109 petitions calling for a bond question to be decided by referendum are being challenged over the writing style on some signatures. The petitions’ fate could basically be linked to the lack of cursive writing, or more specifically, whether a hand-printed name qualifies as a legal signature. That is the quandary District 109’s electoral board must resolve before school expansion plans can move forward. The signature argument will play out in a pair of dueling legal briefs. The outcome could help determine whether

District 109 has the right to issue \$8 million in bonds for expanding two elementary schools, or if it needs to get voter permission first.

Elmhurst (Oct. 26, *Pioneer Press*) A community forum on controversial issues facing Elmhurst CUSD 205 was put on by the League of Women Voters Oct. 22. The presentation gave detailed accounts on everything from the recent purchase of a \$4 million building to the budget process and issues of government transparency. Organizers said the forum was intended to better explain events in the district, including the building purchase, that have been somewhat difficult to understand and have left some residents concerned. Many in the room afterward said they had learned what they wanted to learn and have been waiting to hear for some time.

Evanston (Nov. 11, *Pioneer Press*) Evanston Township High School District 202 wants to ratchet up the district’s 2009 property tax claim to capture the new revenue coming as a result of the expiration of the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district. The board held a public hearing Nov. 9 on a \$62.6 million property tax request that represents a 10.4 percent increase over the district’s tax billings of \$56.7 million for 2008. The higher tax request should have little impact on property owners in a year when a flat property tax cap is putting a tight lid on school tax increases. Aside from claiming the new TIF revenue, the district will be limited to a barely noticeable increase of .1 percent under tax cap provisions.

Lake Zurich (Oct. 26, *Lake Zurich Courier*) A Lake Zurich CUSD 95 contractor is set to inspect Whitney Elementary after CUSD 95’s board of education gave its approval at its Oct. 22 meeting to allow a parent-selected independent contractor to inspect the school for any environmental problems. A group of District 95 par-

ents have been concerned about the school’s asbestos-containing material, lead paint and indoor air quality for several months because of a leaking roof. The board also held an Aug. 20 community forum at the school to allay public concern.

Mundelein (Nov. 2, *News-Sun*) Fremont District 79 and the Lake County Forest Preserve District have entered into an agreement to exchange property. The agreement, finalized by the school board in late October, calls for the school to exchange 43 acres of wetlands property for 21 acres of dry land. After the properties were appraised, the school district agreed to pay the difference in the property values, which totaled \$230,000 or approximately \$11,000 per acre. The forest preserve district will incorporate its new wetlands/savanna/woodlands into its Ray Lake Forest Preserve.

Peoria (Nov. 05, *The Journal Star*) An effort by a group of prominent business and education officials to get Peoria’s first modern-day charter school off the ground may be in jeopardy. With about \$1.7 million, or 70 percent, of the start-up and operational costs the first year expected to come from Peoria District 150, some members of the Peoria Charter School Initiative say the financially strapped school district poses a concern. “I think there is a lot of support for the charter school, but the financial condition of the district presents itself as a roadblock for us,” said a charter school official.

Winnetka (Nov. 10, *Winnetka Talk*) A group called Winnetka Caucus, whose original mission was to help ensure that good, qualified people get elected to the school board, has apparently expanded upon that mission. The caucus will ask the Winnetka District 36 Board of Education to take major concrete steps to ensure a more consistent curriculum.

Leadership conference to celebrate recent attendance hike at new board member training

It is not too early for IASB leaders to plan to attend the association's 2010 Leadership Conference, to be held at the downtown Hyatt Regency, in Chicago, on Feb 19-20.

There will be a Chicago School Tour Friday morning.

The Friday evening agenda for the 2010 event on Feb. 19 will provide an opportunity for division leadership teams to celebrate the increased attendance they helped to bring about in their division of IASB, and throughout the state, via the "20% Challenge."

What exactly were the results? Nine divisions had increased participation of 20% or more; and three more achieved increased participation over 2007 numbers. Statewide, new board member participation also increased over 2007.

That is particularly important because new board member training helps newly elected school board members to more quickly become contributing members of a highly effective board team. Additionally, the greater the participation in voluntary training, the better the case that can be made against mandatory board member training.

"This was an accomplishment for elected officers and leaders in the association, and each division, with so many

making 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 to the Friday celebration, a Saturday morning session on Feb. 20 will explore the topic of "Connecting with the Ownership." Over the next year, the IASB board of directors will be revisiting its Ends Policy – that is, its mission, vision and goals – in order to set direction for the Association as it moves into the next decade. A critical part of that work involves hearing the voice of the Association's ownership – the IASB membership.

And that's where the board needs input from the IASB division leadership, according to Peifer.

During the Saturday morning session, the board will be asking division leaders, as representatives of the ownership, some key questions to help guide their thinking and planning as they review their Ends Policy and plan for the Association's future.

Association leaders will receive invitations to this annual leadership event.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 20 – Professional Advancement Seminar - Seeking the Superintendency, Springfield Office

January 25 – Basics of Law on Board Meetings and Practices, Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, Belleville

January 26 – Basics of Law on Board Meetings and Practices, IASB Springfield

January 27 – Diversity and Inclusion Awareness Workshop, Morton CUSD 709, Central Illinois Valley Division

January 30 – South Cook Division Legislative Breakfast, Cook County SD 130, Blue Island

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



"Lawsuits must really be getting out of hand."