

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD *Newsbulletin*

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Conference draws 85% of districts to training, sharing

Attendance exceeds 11,000 people, up 14%

More than 85 percent of the state's 866 school districts attended the 2011 Joint Annual Conference, Nov. 18-20, in Chicago.

Attendance at the 79th annual conference of IASB, IASA, and Illinois ASBO topped 11,000, exceeding the 2010 conference registrations by more than 14 percent. There were 738 districts represented, 79 more districts than last year.

The increase was attributed to several factors: improved district finances, delivery of overdue state payments, and local boards responding to the call for "accountability" and leadership development.

This year's conference drew 4,512 guests, 3,507 school board members, 1,618 exhibitors, 880 administrators, 628 superintendents, 163 board secretaries, 135 school attorneys, 31 regional superintendents and 22 university professors. Others included IASB Service Associates, state board officials, and special education administrators.

Information and insights on a

See **OVERVIEW** on page 8



The Joint Annual Conference registration area was a hub of activity at the 2011 event, which drew more than 11,000 people, a 14 percent increase over last year.

Delegates agree to resolutions seeking to boost state budget process predictability

The Illinois Association of School Boards has resolved to support legislation to exempt school districts from the scope of the Prevailing Wage Act if state lawmakers will not repeal the applicable provisions of the act, as school board representatives have long requested.

IASB has sought since 1982 to repeal the Illinois law that regulates the wages of laborers, mechanics and other workers employed by school

districts. Supporters of the new resolution said the prevailing wage law is an obstacle to school board members who take an oath to be fiscally responsible with taxpayer funds.

They said the law gets in their way by inhibiting competition and artificially setting wages that would otherwise adjust to market forces to reduce the cost of public school construction.

See **ASSEMBLY** on page 7

On the inside

- New ISBE staff memberPage 2
- Mandatory training course onlinePage 9
- Developments in school lawPage 10

**More
 conference
 coverage**

Pages 4-8

Library grant forms due

Applications are being accepted for the FY 2012 School District Library Grant. Forms and all other information concerning the grant can be found at: http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/library/what_we_do/schoolpercapgrant.html.

The deadline to submit the grant application and signature page is Dec. 30. For questions concerning the grant, please contact Robert Jones at rjones1@ilsos.net or (217) 785-1168, or Becky Hunter at bhunter1@ilsos.net or 217-782-7849.

Elementary achievement gap

State standardized test results released Oct. 31 showed the achievement gap is narrowing at the elementary school level, particularly due to gains among African American, special education, and low income students.

Nine Illinois schools made it off the improvement status list under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 by making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for two consecutive years, even as the bar for proficiency was raised by 7.5 percent each year.

Minority enrollment growth

Illinois' public school minority population grew from 36.7 percent of students in 1997 to 48.6 percent in 2011 and the state's low-income student population increased from 35.7 percent in 1997 to 48.1 percent of students in 2011, according to ISBE. The results were announced as part of ISBE's statewide analysis of the 2011 State Report Card and as the state develops a waiver application for the federal NCLB Act of 2011. NCLB waivers are offered by the Obama administration through the U.S. Department of Education.

Hernandez to strengthen early childhood, English language learning, lead collaboration

The Illinois State Board of Education named an assistant superintendent of English language learning and early childhood as the state board's newest staff member Nov. 17. Reyna Hernandez is a former parent facilitator at **Waukegan CUSD 60**, and was previously a research and policy associate concentrating on immigrant and early childhood issues at the Latino Policy Forum in Chicago.



Reyna Hernandez

"Reyna will help this agency move forward as it builds a preschool through 12th grade education reform strategy that ensures our earliest learners and growing population of English language learners get the best possible education to succeed in the classroom," said State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch.

At the Latino Policy Forum in Chicago she researched relevant early childhood and immigration public policy. Hernandez helped inform the development of the state's policy to serve English language learners in preschool as a staffer for the Illinois Early Learning Council's Linguistic and Cultural Diversity Committee. Last spring, she served as an adjunct professor at DePaul University's College of Education where she designed and taught a course on bilingual education law and policy in the Bilingual Bicultural Education Master's Degree Program.

"Reyna's school district experience and her work in law and policy impacting Latinos will help us keep a keen focus on developing programs and regulations that prepare all Illinois students for success in college and careers," said State Board of Education Chairman Gery J. Chico.

Hernandez held a number of research jobs while earning her Bachelor of Arts in Government from Harvard University. After graduating with

honors from Harvard, she returned to her hometown to work at her alma mater as a Community Education Parent Facilitator in Waukegan School District 60's Parent Information and Support Center. Hernandez later decided she wanted to make a difference for children and families at a broader level and went on to earn her J.D., from New York Law School where she again graduated with honors.

As the Assistant Superintendent for the Center of Language and Early Childhood Development, Hernandez will work closely with the divisions of Early Childhood and English Language Learning toward ensuring that every student is prepared for success. In addition, Hernandez will help lead ISBE's efforts to strengthen family and community engagement – a cornerstone of effective schools.

Hernandez is among those who helped craft the state's recent application for \$70 million in federal funds to develop better coordinated early childhood services in Illinois through the federal Race to the Top grant competition.


Hernandez is based in the agency's Chicago office.

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**

Stumpenhorst honored as 2012 Illinois Teacher of Year at annual 'Excel' banquet

A sixth-grade teacher from Naperville is the 2012 Illinois Teacher of the Year.

Josh Stumpenhorst teaches language arts and social science at Lincoln Junior High School in Naperville CUSD 203.

Stumpenhorst received the honor on Oct. 22 at the 37th annual Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year banquet in Bloomington. He



Josh Stumpenhorst

was chosen from nine finalists.

“Josh is a student-centered teacher who focuses on creating effective learning that will help every student be successful. His ability to reach students of all skill levels engages them and inspires his colleagues,” said State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch.

“Josh also shares his teaching strategies via an online professional learning network that he created. His educational blogs reach thousands of educators across the globe and demon-

strate his leadership skills as well as his continuous efforts to be the best for his students.”

Now in his ninth year of teaching, Stumpenhorst is described by parents and colleagues as a passionate teacher who constantly develops innovative ways to motivate students. Parents also appreciate his ability to help students navigate the social and emotional challenges of junior high.

As Illinois Teacher of the Year, Stumpenhorst will have opportunities to share his knowledge and expertise outside the classroom. Beginning in the 2012 spring semester, he will be available to speak at teaching workshops, educational conferences and community meetings.

He will receive a lifetime tuition waiver to state universities and will represent Illinois at the NASA Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala., and in the National Teacher of the Year program sponsored by Council of Chief State School Officers, ING and Target.

Winners of Those Who Excel awards who are board members were listed in the November *Newsbulletin*.

Coming workshop aims to clarify district ends, develop mission, goals

IASB will offer the proven workshop, “The Board’s First Responsibility: Detecting and Communicating a Compelling Vision,” at three different locations in February 2012.

The workshop, which runs from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., is designed to help boards develop a process and a plan for identifying and clarifying their district ends based on community values and aspirations.

This includes examining how the school board can develop the mission, vision, strategic plan, and goals for the district.

Workshops will be offered Feb. 11, 2012 in Springfield and Feb. 18, 2012 in Naperville and Carbondale.

Tuition is \$200 per person, which includes materials as well as meals. Registration must be received at least one week before each workshop.

More information is available by calling ext. 1103. Online registration will be available soon by visiting the Events Calendar: <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm>.

Energy prices near ‘low’ market amount, appear to be leveling out

The 2011 year-to-date prices for natural gas and electricity are indicating that the market may be leveling out, according to company liaisons with the Illinois Energy Consortium.

At around-the-state IEC meetings organized by the Illinois Association of School Business Officials in October, Glenn Grimm of Constellation Energy said natural gas prices may still go lower than the current 37 cents/therm, but that price was very favorable going into November and the winter heating season.

Tonya Powell of Ameren Electric said electric rates may be very close to bottoming out, because power can’t



be generated much cheaper than it is right now.

Both encouraged attendees to consider joining the 300 public school districts, private schools, junior colleges, colleges, universities and inter-governmental agencies that currently are part of the IEC buying pool that formed in 1998.

Because the consortium increases purchasing leverage and efficiency for its members, Grimm and Powell advised that districts should look at prices for energy other than when their current contracts expire.

Districts are allowed to contract through the IEC for their energy needs, bypassing the need for local bidding because the consortium employs a professional purchasing agent, Latham & Associates, which actually bids for its members.

The IEC is a joint program sponsored by IASB, IASA and Illinois ASBO. For more information, contact Grimm at glen.grimm@constellation.com or TPowell2@ameren.com.

2011 Joint Annual Conference

Schools, architects honored as 'EEE' winners for advanced STEM designs

The Niles THSD 219 and Champaign CUSD 4 schools were honored Nov. 18 with the top-level Award of Distinction in the 2011 Invitational Exhibition of Educational Environments (EEE).

The awards were presented at the Joint Annual Conference to District 219 and Legat Architects, and to District 4 and Cannon Design.

The two projects, both involving high-tech Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) labs, were the only ones in the state to receive the top EEE award, which recognizes excellence in the design of educational environments.

The concept of the STEM-centric, project-based learning environment allows each academy to be inwardly focused, forming a cluster of three learning studios that open onto a communal gathering and project workspace for discussion and collaboration.

Development of Booker T. Washington STEM Academy in Champaign integrated a new building with the STEM curriculum through use of collaborative and project-based learning.

The Champaign structure boasts a community based design process and includes features for community use and for maintaining a connection between the history of the neighborhood and school.

The single, 60,300-square-foot building includes a geothermal HVAC system and daylighting to achieve high energy efficiency, resulting in a 35% to 40% energy reduction.

The outdoor learning areas and landscaping are designed to integrate with the school's science curriculum through the use of native vegetation, and vegetable gardens. This is intended to foster a sense of environmental stewardship and healthy lifestyle choices in the students.

Grade-level academic communi-

ties, consisting of three classrooms and a collaboration area, create a project-based learning environment. The aim is to help students at the school gain the skills and abilities to think critically, solve complex problems, and understand advancements in science and technology.

The Niles STEM labs already have been a factor in attracting more students into technological careers. "They give our teachers the resources and flexibility to equip students with the 21st Century skills they need to succeed in the global workforce," says Niles District 219 superintendent Dr. Nanciann Gatta.

Each 3,000-square-foot lab offers collegiate-level applications and technologies to optimize research, interaction, and critical thinking.

Combined, the labs allow Niles THSD 219 to maintain a focus on real-world problem solving, and to extend it to younger students. For two years, the district has used the award-winning labs to host its "Sizzling Summer Engineering" camp for grades four through eight, as well as its "Sizzling Summer Science" camp for grades K through nine.

Lois Wisniewski, District 219 director of science, says, "The labs allow us to capitalize on the strategy at the heart of the STEM program: give students an avenue to develop questions based on topics they find interesting, and then pursue those questions with original research in an authentic setting."

Images from the Niles top-award-winning designs are available online at: http://www.legat.com/?_p=portfolio,k12-education,project_2#

The Champaign academy is available online at: http://www.champaignschools.org/news/news_files/IASB%202011%20EEE_BTW_PDFversion.pdf



Shelly F. Marks, honored as the top school board president, said "our job is to work hard and...exceed expectations."

Homewood D153 leader receives 2011 Burroughs

Shelly F. Marks, board president in Homewood SD 153, is the winner of the 2011 Thomas Lay Burroughs Award, which honors the top school board leader.

Marks was nominated by district superintendent Dale Mitchell. This was the 21st year for the award. Steven R. Gilford of Evanston, a member of the Illinois State Board of Education, presented the award on behalf of ISBE.

Gilford said Marks' nomination described her as being "highly visible with a very approachable style." In her nine years as board president, he said, the district has cut its achievement gap in half while spending less per pupil than the state average.

"We try to do what's right for the children of Homewood," Marks said in accepting the award.

Marks praised her fellow board members as being dedicated and coming to the table without an agenda. But, she added, it takes everyone "from the lunch ladies and the aides on the playground right up to the superintendent and the parents."

Marks' two sons from Colorado were present in the audience along with her husband and fellow board members to see her accept the award.

"My sons are like every child who deserves the best education," Marks said. "Our job is to work hard every

See **BURROUGHS** on page 5

2011 Joint Annual Conference

Board secretary Crews takes home Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award

Dottie Crews, who has served 27 years as the administrative district secretary in New Berlin CUSD 16 received this year's Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award.

The presentation was made Nov. 18 at the 79th Joint Annual Conference.

Crews, one of 25 nominees for the award, has been assistant to three superintendents and served as the high school secretary prior to working in the central office. CUSD 16 is a unit district with approximately 820 students in grades pre-K through 12.

Help from her district secretary when she was in high school actually spurred Crews to follow the same career path, she said. Crews credited her also with showing her how to assist people in need.

In their nomination, New Berlin superintendent Valerie Carr and District 16 past board president Richard Behl noted some of Crew's specific accomplishments, including her work as the district's contact with a local bank that hosts an Angel Tree for children in the district who would otherwise not have gifts during the holiday



IASB Executive Director Emeritus Michael Johnson presents the Holly Jack Award to Dottie Crews of New Berlin CUSD 16.

season.

Carr also mentioned the tireless work Crews put in during the construction of a new elementary school, assuring that all necessary meetings with architects and various contractors were scheduled as needed.

"Her great sense of humor, wisdom, excellent secretarial skills, and her genuine care for all those she has served have been a gift to the district," Carr wrote.

"She exhibits the characteristics outlined in the Holly Jack Award every day. She is one in a million."

Accepting the award, Crews' remarks drew laughter when she talked about starting her district career with

a mimeograph machine, a manual typewriter and "a calculator half as big as my desk."

During her tenure in the district, she said she has worked with 19 board members and 16 principals, and has taken minutes at 336 board meetings, "not counting special meetings."

Crews will be ending her career upon retirement in June 2012.

A selection committee of school board members, school business officials, district administrative assistants and IASB administrative assistants selected Crews in October.

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

This was the third year for the award, which was created to honor the memory of Holly Jack, a long-time IASB employee, who served as a field services administrative assistant and was instrumental in promoting and developing the secretaries' program that is offered at the Conference.

Handouts from over 95 conference panels go online

Handouts from more than 95 panels presented at this year's Joint Annual Conference are now available on the IASB Members-Only website at <http://members.iasb.com>.

Panels with online links to their materials are listed by the panel title and hotel/room name. The panels appear in chronological order of the conference; by day and time slot presented. The only exception is the board secretaries' panels, which are listed at the end of the other panels.

Access to the Members-Only website to obtain the handouts is limited to board members, superintendents and secretaries who have a member ID number contained within the IASB database.

Access is free; however, users must set up an account with their member ID number. The number appears on mailing labels of all materials sent out by IASB, and it begins with a "2."

For information on how to access the site, visit <https://www.iasb.com/press/memonly.cfm>.

BURROUGHS *from page 4*

day, despite the obstacles, to not just meet but exceed expectations."

District 153 is located 25 miles south of Chicago and serves Homewood as well as parts of Glenwood and Hazel Crest. The pre-K through eighth-grade district has 1,987 students in four buildings.

The Burroughs Award for extraordinary leadership is named for the late chairman of the ISBE, an attorney who also served as president of the Collinsville CUSD 10 board. He died in 1991 at age 40.

2011 Joint Annual Conference

Business officials bestow Everett Award, 'true leader' honored at 2011 Conference

Shelley Clark, business manager at **Benjamin SD 25** in West Chicago, was recognized at the 2011 Joint Annual Conference as the winner of the Ronald E. Everett Distinguished Service Award.

Presented by the Illinois Association of School Business Officials (Illinois ASBO), the award honors diligence, superior performance and service to the school business public. It is given to recognize the 24 years of service that Everett gave to Illinois ASBO as executive director.

In accepting her award, Clark encouraged board members, administrators and her fellow business officials to work with their communities and their legislators to let them know of the potential impact of their actions.

"We all have to do this together," she said.

Clark said it had been her honor to be associated with Illinois ASBO and work on behalf of the school children in Illinois.

She began as a business manager in 1985 for **Mundelein ESD 75**.

In 1992, she moved to **Gurnee**



The Everett Award winner for 2012 is Shelley Clark. Illinois ASBO President Richard A. Lesniak presents the award.

School District 56 for two years before accepting a position as chief financial officer and chief operating officer for **Winnetka School District 36**.

Clark guided preparations for five successful referendums, led administrative teams in long-term strategic planning, wrote education grants, and served on community task forces and district technology committees.

She was Illinois ASBO president from 1996 to 1997. She was that Association's first female president.

Free viewing of 2011 event photos available on secure Web site now

A gallery of photos from the entire conference is available at a secure third party site, <http://momentshare.com/levyphoto/>. Viewing is free and photos are available for purchase. Event name (iasb2011) and password (chicago) are required for access.

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.

More conference news, photos available online

In addition to the articles and photos on these pages, IASB has posted complete information from the 2011 Joint Annual Conference online at: <http://iasb.com/jac11>.

Added postings include: evaluation survey; panels and interviews on TV; first, second and third general sessions; results from the Service Associates' bingo game and Online Learning Center raffle; and information about CPDU credits.

Information about the 2012 Joint Annual Conference will be announced as it becomes available. Currently, IASB has posted online the request for panel proposals and another request for student talent DVDs.

District panel proposals for 2012 Conference

A select number of school districts and organizations will be chosen to make panel presentations at the 80th Joint Annual Conference in November 2012.

These 90-minute panel sessions – presented by the board members, administrators and other school or community members who were involved in the particular programs showcased – are based on actual school system experiences.

Presenters give insight and practical information on how to solve common problems. They share discoveries and innovations from programs succeeding in their school districts. And they give tips on how school boards

can achieve similar successes in their own school districts.

A committee of Association members will evaluate all proposals received in the IASB Springfield office by Feb. 17, 2012. Invitations will be issued to the districts and organizations recommended by those evaluators.

Districts and organizations that are not selected to make their presentations during a 90-minute panel session may be asked to present at the alternative, 30 minute "Carousel of Panels" sessions.

Panel proposals may be submitted electronically or by mail. Information and forms are available at: <http://iasb.com/jac12/rfp.cfm>.

2011 Joint Annual Conference

'Average kid' Flynn named Superintendent of Year by IASA

Peter F. Flynn, superintendent of **Freeport District 145**, is the 2012 Illinois Superintendent of the Year as named by the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA).

The award was presented on Nov. 19 during the second general session of the 2011 Joint Annual Conference.

Flynn joined Freeport schools in 2000, and now has amassed 32 years of school superintendent experience and leadership at districts in four states. His ability to provide purpose, direction and motivation fundamentally changed the path of the Freeport district.

But Flynn's own path was not always smoothly paved.

"I was an average kid in Poughkeepsie, New York," he said. "He's not college material" is what my parents heard," he confessed, and for a while those words seemed prophetic.

He persevered by working two jobs through high school, and eventually joining the Job Corps, "where I worked with my future wife – that was a life-changing experience," he



Peter F. Flynn, of Freeport District 145, is the 2012 Illinois Superintendent of the Year.

said. This led Flynn to pursue an opportunity to attend college, and eventually to go on to a "48-plus year career in education," he said, noting that his own story is "a reflection of the value of equity in education."

Freeport board president, Gary Maxey, nominated Flynn for the award, noting: "Peter Flynn arrived during a critical time in our district 12 years ago — a time when equity issues were coming to a head, both within the district and the larger community.

"One of Peter's first important actions, alongside the board of edu-

cation, was the crafting of a memorandum of understanding agreement between the primary group calling for change, our school district, and the teachers' union.

"The partnership Peter established brought about significant operational improvements, and has flourished over the years. It has led to a more equitable treatment of minority students and a narrowing of the achievement gap. Furthermore, he created and sustains an atmosphere in which diversity is both respected and appreciated," according to Maxey.

The Illinois State Board of Education selected Flynn as one of "Those who Excel" in 2008, receiving the highest honor given to superintendents by ISBE when he was recognized with an Award of Excellence.

Flynn will represent Illinois in the National Superintendent of the Year Recognition Ceremony during the American Association of School Administrators' National Conference on Education in February 2012, in Houston. The National Superintendent of the Year will be announced at that conference.

ASSEMBLY from page 1

Representatives from 342 Illinois school districts considered seven resolutions on various public school issues at the Association's annual Delegate Assembly. The assembly was held in conjunction with the 2011 Joint Annual Conference, Nov. 18-20, in Chicago. Delegates adopted four new positions, amended three and reaffirmed six existing IASB positions, and rejected eight other proposals.

Sponsors of the proposal seeking to amend the prevailing wage act said school leaders have been forced to pay wages that independent research indicates are 20 to 40 percent higher than market-set wages.

Hinsdale Township High School District 86 submitted the resolution,

arguing that 18 states already have no prevailing wage law, while Ohio has exempted public school construction from their law.

Supporter Jeff Mays, board member of **Quincy District 172**, said the exemption would allow a greater number of necessary Illinois school construction projects to be carried out.

"If you are like our district, you probably have a lot of construction projects delayed already. If you have to pay prevailing wages, you are going to have fewer project proceed," Mays stated.

The measure was passed overwhelmingly by the school board delegates.

Representatives approved another

budget-related position amendment that would require the state to pay interest on late general state aid

The list of all 21 resolutions and a description of the Delegate Assembly process and procedures are available in the 2011 Report to Membership.

As part of the Delegate Assembly, representatives also heard reports from Executive Director Emeritus Michael D. Johnson and outgoing Association President Joseph Alesandri. Carolyn Brooks was elected as the new president and Karen Fisher as vice president. Both will serve one-year terms.

Brooks is a board member in **West Richland CUSD 2**. Fisher is a board member in **Ottawa THSD 140**.

2011 Joint Annual Conference

OVERVIEW *from page 1*

wide range of issues in school governance and public education were found at 220 exhibits, 110 panel sessions, 31 “carousel” panels, seven pre-conference workshops, three general sessions, bookstore, delegate assembly, and other various learning and networking opportunities.

This year’s panel sessions drew 9,792 people, compared to the total attendance of 7,258 last year. Panel sessions, which are held in five time slots over three days, averaged 89 persons per panel, compared to 63 per panel in 2010.

Seven of the 110 panel sessions drew standing-room-only audiences.

Legislative, legal, collective bargaining, and finance issues were hot topics for 2011. The single largest panel – *Pension Reform Update* – attracted 490 people.

A total of 711 people attended five other legislative panels, including: *Legislative Hot Topics*, *Legislative Issues Impacting School Districts*, *Federal Legislative Update*, *Where are you Sending My Children to School*, and *Implications of Pension Reform*.

A legal panel that met new mandatory requirements on *Open Meetings Act Training* drew 390 people. Those who completed this training earned certification to satisfy the state requirements.

Nine other legal panels combined to draw 969 people: *Navigating Through Education Reform*, *School Law 2011: 5 Things Boards Need to Know*, *Legal Issues in 2011*, *Are Your Teachers Fit for Duty*, *Schools and Social Media use*, *Social Networking Policy and Legal Implications*, *Superintendent Employment Contract*, *Legally Stumped*, and *Special Education Top 10 List*.

In addition, the Illinois Council of School Attorneys’ seminar on Friday offered 135 attorneys the opportunity to earn 5.25 credits toward mandatory continuing legal education.

Collective bargaining topics were presented in six different panels this year. The panel drawing the most attendees (330) was *Education Reform Act Changes Your Dealings with Teachers and Unions*.

Another 542 conference goers attended panels on *Common Mistakes in Collective Bargaining*, *Fundamentals of Collective Bargaining*, *Impact of Personalities in Collective Bargaining*, *Bargaining Implications of Evaluation, Tenure and Discipline*, and *Collaborative Bargaining as Reform Resource*.

School finance was as relevant in 2011 as it is most years. To help new board members elected in April 2011, two panels were presented as *School Finance for the Novice: Revenue and Expenditures*, which combined to attract 346 conference attendees.

Eighteen other panels addressed school finance. Combined, these panels drew 911 participants.

Popular again as well was the “Carousel of Panels” held on Saturday afternoon at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel and Towers. More than 320 board members and administrators attended the 31 panels that rotated in three 30-minute sessions.

A separate strand of professional development for board secretaries was held at the Swissotel Chicago.

Attendance at seven elective pre-conference workshops held at the Sheraton Towers on Friday exceeded 625 people. In fact, four of the workshops – *The Basics of Governance*, *Basics of School District Finance*, *Visions, Values, Conflicts and Choices*; and *Introduction to Collective Bargaining* – were sold out.

The 2011 conference also featured workshops for members of IASA and Illinois ASBO, tours of five Chicago Public Schools, three general sessions and keynote speakers, and various meetings of work-alike groups.

This year’s keynoters were author Wes Moore, a performance by StandUp

Change!, and Georgia legislator Brooks Coleman Jr. The general sessions’ featured guests included state school board officials, past presidents of IASB, and NSBA President Mary Broderick of Connecticut.

Hundreds of members and guests also took advantage of IASB’s Information Room, where they could talk, meet Association officers and staff, meet state board officials, and hear about the features of IASB services, including BoardBook®, the Members-Only website, school board policies online hosting service, and the LeaderShop Online Learning Center.

The exhibit hall was also very popular and at times very crowded. A Bingo game was held and drew 156 entries for 20 winning gift cards.

This was the fifth 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 conference. More than 157 teachers took advantage of this offer.

This was the first year names of school board members were randomly drawn to ride on the top event sponsor’s float at the head of the annual Magnificent Mile Lights Festival parade on Friday night. The two winners chosen to ride on the BMO Harris Bank float were Deb Ahrens, **Mannheim SD 83**, Franklin Park; and Sherrie Weaver, **West Prairie SD 103**, Colchester (as it happened, this was her very first Joint Annual Conference).

The 80th Joint Annual Conference will be held Nov. 16-18, 2012, in Chicago.

A Call for Proposals has been posted online for local districts that want to make panel presentations, available at: <http://iasb.com/jac12/rfp.cfm>. Information for exhibitors will be posted in early February, while housing and registration forms will be available in early June 2012.

State's mandatory training requirement can be fulfilled via new online course

IASB will offer a new online course in 2012 designed to meet state-mandated training for school board members.

Illinois law (P.A. 97-0008) enacted on June 13, 2011, requires school board members elected after June 13, 2011, or appointed to fill a vacancy of at least one year's duration after that date, to complete a minimum of four hours of professional development leadership training.

This training must occur within the first year of their term of office and must include education and labor law, financial oversight and accountability, and fiduciary responsibilities of a school board member.

Beginning with the April 9, 2013, elections, mandatory board member training legislation will cover anyone — new or incumbent — elected to the board. They also will have one year from the time they take office to complete the training.

More information about the mandatory board training law and its requirements is provided in the November/December *Illinois School*

Board Journal in the "Ask the Staff" column: <http://iasb.com/askthestaff/nd11.cfm>.

The new course, titled Professional Development Training for School Board Members, will be available on the IASB's Online Learning Center beginning in mid-January, 2012. This online offering will allow board members to meet the mandatory training requirements at their own pace, on their own schedule, and in the comfort of their own home.

Information about the course content and registration is available at: http://www.iasb.com/training/online-learning_courses.cfm. Information about how to take IASB online courses is available at: http://www.iasb.com/training/onlinelearning_how.cfm.

Tuition for the new course is affordable — \$50 per course for IASB members, \$100 for non-members — and IASB member participants will earn both LeaderShop Academy and Master Board Member credit for course completion. Additionally, participants will receive a Certificate of Comple-

See **MANDATORY** on page 12

IASB honors LeaderShop Academy Fellows

Two more board members — in addition to those mentioned in the November *Illinois School Board Newsbulletin* — were honored this fall for their accomplishment in earning or maintaining School Board LeaderShop Academy Fellowship status. This brings to 18 the number of living school board members who have earned Fellow status.

The two additional board members honored as Fellows at division meetings this year are: Nancy Tobin, **Mannheim SD 83**; and Larry Blackburn, **Reed-Custer 255U**. Larry became a LeaderShop Fellow last year and maintained his Master Board Member status this year. Nancy is new to Fellowship status this year.

The School Board LeaderShop

Academy promotes and recognizes board members' continuous learning and professional development. Some programs are offered every other year to accommodate board turnover following the biennial election. Other programs are offered every year.

Academy members are recognized for their commitment to continuous learning in various ways. Upon admission to the Academy, members receive a LeaderShop Academy pen. LeaderShop Fellows receive a plaque recognizing their achievement and are invited to serve in advisory and/or mentoring positions around effective governance issues. The names of Members Emeritus are listed on a permanent honor roll displayed at IASB and they are offered a lifelong subscription to IASB publications.

NEWS FROM IASB

Membership information

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. Updated information about individual board members should be forwarded to Janice Kidd at ext. 1142, or jkidd@iasb.com.

IASB membership

IASB ended the calendar year with a total of 851 member school districts, leaving 13 districts as non-members. That count of member districts was out of the state's total of 864 public school districts, meaning 98.6 percent of all school districts in Illinois are members of their association. That percentage represents an all-time high for IASB's membership ratio.

Superintendent lunches

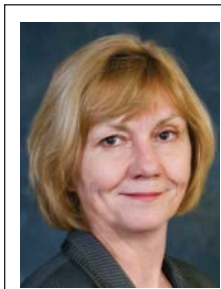
IASB's field services department reports that attendance at the association's new superintendent luncheons this year increased from approximately 32 percent of new superintendents (25 of 78 in attendance) last year, to 45 percent (34 of 76) this year.

"We appreciate that so many new superintendents took the time to meet our staff and to learn more about the association," said IASB Associate Executive Director, Cathy Talbert, who heads the Field Services and Policy Services Department.

Credit for the increase goes to the department staff for offering the luncheons at five regional locations this year. In past years the luncheons were held at IASB offices in Springfield and Lombard.

The presentation highlighted services and resources available to assist superintendents as they do the key work of supporting their school boards in their governance role.

Holiday activities need not carry “Bah Humbug” consequences



Melinda Selbee
is IASB's general
counsel

Across Illinois, the holiday season is evident in the abundant decorations, tree stands, and holiday music. Every community has its own unique way of recognizing Christmas, Hanukkah, and the overall holiday season. This is true for public schools too. But, wait; is it permissible for public schools to recognize the religious aspects of the holidays?

School officials have a lot of latitude concerning holiday activities in schools. Some districts minimally recognize the entire holiday season preferring to keep disruption down and to avoid the religious realm. Other districts sponsor a variety of holiday activities with an educational focus. With all the options and divergent opinions concerning holiday activities, adhering to established legal principles can reduce holiday angst. Knowing these principles will also help you explain your district's treatment of the holidays if it is challenged

DEVELOPMENTS IN SCHOOL LAW

by community members or parents.

Our courts began defining the scope of permissible religious activities in public schools in the early 1960s when the U.S. Supreme Court held that mandatory school prayer and Bible reading violate the First Amendment. Since then, many court decisions have examined requirements imposed by three clauses in the First Amendment. The Establishment Clause requires public schools to refrain from any activity that “establishes” or promotes religion. The Free Exercise Clause prohibits them from burdening an individual's exercise of his or her religion. The Free Speech Clause prohibits public schools from favoring or disfavoring religious viewpoints. In an effort to avoid promoting a religion, school officials must be careful to avoid burdening religious practices or squelching religious speech.

The overarching principles that can help school officials understand and comply with these constitutional requirements are to be neutral and have a legitimate educational purpose. Neutrality means not endorsing or promoting a religious belief while at the

same time not discouraging or penalizing a religious belief. Neutrality also means not acting on the basis of an individual's pro- or anti-religious message. Having a legitimate educational purpose means that the activity is connected to the curriculum and is not religious instruction or celebration.

Applying these principles requires school officials to evaluate holiday activities on a case-by-case basis. See how you do with these situations:

Example #1

Your district's schools have winter concerts that include secular music (*Rudolf*, etc.) and Christmas carols (e.g., *First Noel*). The music program includes diverse, seasonal music to advance students' music knowledge and appreciation. The music is not used to celebrate Christmas or Hanukkah. No one is forced to participate.

Is this holiday activity permitted?

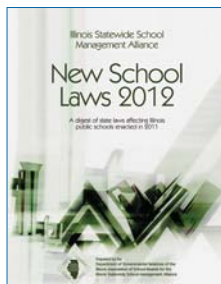
YES. The carols are used as part of the educational program. Three federal Circuit Courts of Appeals have upheld the constitutionality of performing religious music in public

See **HOLIDAY** on page 11

Coming publication lists newly adopted school laws and policy service citations

IASB will mail in January a summary of newly adopted laws and changes to existing laws that are relevant to public school districts.

New School Laws summarizes bills adopted during the spring session of the Illinois General Assembly and signed into law by the governor. Compiled by the IASB for the Illinois Statewide School Manage-



ment 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, nor is the publication intended as a substitute for the Illinois Compiled Statutes or legal coun-

sel. The synopsis of each act is brief and may or may not encompass the full content or impact of the act. However, 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.

Legislators agree to pay regional superintendents this year, not beyond

In the legislature's Veto Session on Nov. 10, state lawmakers finally agreed on a way to pay the salaries of the regional superintendents of schools for the current fiscal year. But that may not be the end of the story.

Lawmakers approved SB 2147 (Sullivan, D-Rushville), with an amendment sponsored by Rep. Frank Mautino (D-Spring Valley), in the House of Representatives.

As adopted, the bill contains provisions to require that the salaries

of regional superintendents and regional assistants be paid out of Corporate Personal Property Replacement Tax (CPPRT) funds – *for the current fiscal year only*. The bill would allow for the regional superintendents to receive their paychecks, retroactively, this school year, and to revisit the larger issue of the role of the Regional Offices of Education (ROE) next year.

More than 84 ROE employees, including all 44 Regional Superintendents, began getting state paychecks again at the end of November,

although their back pay could take a bit longer.

The intent is that over the next year lawmakers will study the role of each ROE and make changes accordingly. The bill creates the "Streamlining Illinois' Regional Offices of Education Commission" to "explore and examine all duties of the State Board of Education and all regional offices of education and intermediate service centers."

See **VETO** on page 12

HOLIDAY from page 10

schools. As said in one decision, "[t]here is nothing unconstitutional about the use of religious subjects or materials in public schools as long as it is presented as part of the secular program of education." *Florey v. Sioux Falls School District*, 619 F.2d 1311 (8th Cir. 1980), *cert. denied*, 449 U.S. 987. The court found Christmas carols have a cultural significance that justifies their being sung in public schools as long as they are presented in an objective manner and as a part of our nation's cultural and religious heritage.

Example #2

School buildings and classrooms are decorated in December with typical holiday trimmings. Pictures of Santa and Frosty are there, as are Kwanza symbols and religious symbols, such as, a menorah, Star of David, and a nativity scene. The symbols are used to teach students about diverse cultures and traditions.

Is this holiday activity permitted?

YES. The religious aspects of the holiday decorations and displays are temporary, not overemphasized, and are not presented as a religious message. A display that is purely religious and located prominently may send the message that the school is endorsing religion. Mixing secular symbols with the religious symbols and including cultural and historical messages will help ensure holiday displays and

decorations are permissible. *Allegheny County v. Pittsburgh ACLU*, 446 A.2d 334, *appeal after remand*, 471 A.2d 128, *cert. denied*, 488 U.S. 815 (1989); *Skoros v. City of New York*, 437 F.3d 1 (2d Cir., 2006).

Example #3

A parent wants to read the story of Christ's birth over the loudspeaker before the classroom holiday parties.

Is this holiday activity permitted?

NO. This is an inherently religious activity that is not neutral because it clearly promotes religion. Compare the parent's request to the teaching of religion as part of a balanced, secular education. The study of the Bible or religion is permissible when presented objectively as part of a secular education. *School Dist. of Abington Twp v. Schempp*, 374 U.S. 203 (1963); *Lee v. Weisman*, 505 U.S. 577 (1992).

Example #4

A student wants to give his classmates a candy cane ink pen during the winter-break party at school. A laminated bookmark is attached to the pen and contains *The Legend of the Candy Cane* which attributes religious symbolism to candy canes. The principal fears distribution of a religious message during a school event is an endorsement of religion.

Is this holiday activity permitted?

Unsettled. A federal Circuit Court of Appeals recently decided a case in

which a principal stopped an elementary student from distributing candy cane pens with the religious message. The student alleged the principal violated his free speech and free exercise rights. The court found no persuasive authority concerning the rights of elementary students to distribute religious messages at school. For this reason the court granted the principal qualified immunity from suit finding the principal did not violate a clearly established constitutional right. The court, however, never decided the underlying constitutional question, i.e., whether elementary students have a First Amendment right to distribute written religious messages during a school-sponsored activity. Another Circuit Court of Appeals previously upheld a school's restriction on a student seeking to distribute the candy-cane message. *Morgan v. Swanson*, 2011 WL 4470233 (5th Cir. 9/29/2011); *Curry v. Saginaw City School District*, 513 F.3d 570 (6th Cir. 2008).

Common sense and good judgment will go a long way for school officials as they apply the neutrality rule and require holiday activities have an educational purpose. The board attorney can help school officials navigate through specific situations. School officials should consult with the board attorney before a controversy beyond a snowball incident arises.



School Board Members Day

School districts around the state honored their board members on the fourth annual School Board Members Day in Illinois, Nov. 15. Students in **Libertyville District 70** went so far as to cook lunch for — seated from left to right — Superintendent Guy Schumacher, Board Secretary Maryann Ovassapion, School Board Member Anne Brandt and Assistant Principal Jon Hallmark. School districts downloaded a total of 2,612 documents from IASB's website to help organize activities for the day, including hundreds of news releases, announcements and certificates for presentation to board members.

VETO from page 11

The commission is also instructed to examine, in order to more appropriately and efficiently deliver services, the boundaries of the educational service regions in order to determine which duties and responsibilities should be provided regionally and whether the boundaries of the education service regions should be expanded to streamline the regional offices of education.

The study commission, the composition of which is very similar to that of the school consolidation commission, will report back to the General Assembly next year with its recommendations.

SB 2147 was approved by the House on a vote of 74-36; the Senate passed the bill 38-16-1. An accompanying appropriations bill, SB 2458, was also

approved by both chambers. The governor signed both bills on Nov. 14.

SB 2147 is now Public Act 97-0619, and SB 2458 is now Public Act 97-0620. The laws became effective immediately.

IASB opposed SB 2147 because the approach used to pay the state officials in ROE offices takes money away from public schools.

"We disagree with the governor's belief that it should be a local responsibility," said Ben Schwarm, IASB associate executive director for governmental relations.

Schwarm said school districts will take a hit for at least the next eight months as corporate personal property replacement tax revenue gets diverted.

MANDATORY from page 9

tion that may be presented to their board so that information may be posted on the district website as required by law.

Payment options allow members to pay by purchase order or credit cards. Board members are advised to check first with their district policy manual

to assure that their board policy permits payment or reimbursement for such professional development.

Information about IASB's Leadership Online Learning Center, is available by contacting: onlinelearning@iasb.com, or Sandra Kwasa, board development director, at ext. 1213.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 3 – Kaskaskia Division Winter Governing Committee Meeting, Cancelled

January 5 – Shawnee Division Winter Governing Meeting, Bennie's Italian Foods, Marion

January 24 – School Finance for Board Members, Beyond the Basics, Edison Jr. High, Pekin

January 25 – Professional Advancement - Seeking the Superintendency, IASB Springfield

February 4 – South Cook Legislative Breakfast, Calumet Public SD 132, Calumet Park

February 11 – The Board's First Responsibility: Detecting and Communicating a Compelling Vision, Crowne Plaza Springfield

February 18 – The Board's First Responsibility: Detecting and Communicating a Compelling Vision, NIU Naperville, and Holiday Inn, Carbondale

For more information about or additions to events, see the IASB website at www.iasb.com/calendar/.

Referendum question ballot deadlines near

Two deadlines are approaching that will affect public policy questions on the March 20, 2012, primary ballot.

Friday, Dec. 30, is the last day for school boards to adopt a resolution to put public policy questions on the primary ballot (ILCS 5/28-2).

Thursday, Jan. 12, 2012, is the last day for the board secretary to certify public policy questions to the election authority for referendum at the March 20, 2012 General Primary Election (10 ILCS 5/28-5).

For more information about election deadlines, download a complete list, including legal citations to pertinent Illinois laws, at: http://www.iasb.com/pdf/cal_12.pdf