

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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Attendance at the 2013 Joint Annual Conference, held Nov. 22-24 in Chicago, was 2.5 percent higher than the previous year.

This was the 81st meeting of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators and Illinois Association of School Business Officials. Total attendance was 10,425. Those registered included 4,171 guests, 3,304 board members, 1,454 administrators, as well as board secretaries, school attorneys, regional and state education officials, and other organizations.

Eighty-four percent, or 718 of the state's 859 public school districts were represented.

The bump in attendance was attributed to several factors, including, board members seeking to fulfill mandatory state training requirements, and events held to commemorate the 100th

Also see other stories on
Conference starting on page 4

anniversary of IASB.

Professional development was the primary purpose of the conference, offered through 267 exhibit booths, 116 panel sessions, 33 "carousel" panels, seven pre-conference workshops, five school tours, three general sessions, as well as the IASB Delegate Assembly, bookstore, and other learning and networking opportunities.

Panel sessions, delivered in 90-minute segments in five different time slots over the three-day conference, drew 9,863 people. Eleven panels were identified as "Standing Room Only," including three with a seating capacity of 475. Those three were: "Legislative Issues Impacting School Districts," "What's New in Employ-

See CONFERENCE on page 6

Pension reform law passed after years of debate, deficits

The Illinois General Assembly returned to the Capitol Dec. 3 and approved a major pension reform bill that makes substantial changes to retirement benefits for Illinois teachers, legislators, university employees, and state employees.

Lawmakers were summoned back to Springfield after a conference committee appointed this summer to continue discussions on last spring's pension legislation, SB 1 (Cullerton, D-Chicago), reached an agreement with the four top legislative leaders on a pension reform package.

The Conference Committee Report on SB 1 was filed as legislation on Dec. 2. Proponents estimate the package will reduce the state's pension liability by \$160 billion over the next 30 years. Slightly more than half of the pension deficit reduction, according to House Speaker Michael Madigan (D-Chicago), is a result of new supplemental state spending (from the Pension Stabilization Fund) which will be required each year until the pension systems are 100 percent funded. The remainder of the pension deficit reduction results from changes in pension benefits for current employees and annuitants.

The Illinois House approved SB 1 on a vote of 62-53-1; the Senate on a 30-24-3 vote. The Governor signed

See PENSION on page 3

Family webinars set

ISBE will host a series of webinars throughout this school year on how schools and districts integrate parents into the school improvement process. The first webinar is Dec. 12, from 1:15-2:15 p.m., covering web-based family engagement resources and the Illinoisparents.org website. Space is limited. Reserve at <https://www1.gotomeeting.com/register/627000096>. For more information call 618/874-8150 or log onto http://www.isbe.net/grants/html/parent_adi.htm.

Regional offices mapped

ISBE approved a new map to consolidate the Regional Offices of Education at its Nov. 22 meeting. A new law required reduction of ROEs from 44 to 35. Final consolidation responsibility fell to the state board. The law stated that, if locally determined consolidations result in more than 35 regions of populations greater than 61,000 or more inhabitants, the state board had to direct further consolidations starting with the region of lowest population.

Ideas sought on wellness

ISBE and Action for Healthy Kids are inviting people with expertise in school health and wellness to submit session ideas for presentation during the seventh annual Illinois School Wellness Conference, April 30, 2014, in Champaign. Presentations are sought that highlight wellness-related outreach in schools, innovative projects that improve the overall health of the community, etc. For more information, including an application, visit http://www.ahk.org/filelib/Call_for_Proposals_7th_Annual_IL_School_Wellness_Conference.doc, or contact Heidi Knoblock at hknoblock@actionforhealthykids.org. Phone 312/878-2712 if you have questions.

State names school improvement center director of national note

The Illinois State Board of Education has recently announced that the new director of the Illinois Center for School Improvement is José Rico.

Rico will lead the strategic development of the Illinois Statewide System of Support (SSoS) and will manage implementation of the Center's activities, services and staff. The director is responsible for facilitating collaboration and partnerships with the regional offices of education and intermediate service centers, the ISBE Roundtable, and other support system partners.



Jose Rico

Rico, a graduate of Chicago Public Schools, served as the founding principal of Chicago's Multicultural Arts High School, which opened in 2005. Previously, he worked for the University of Illinois-Chicago's College of Education, where he helped develop small, innovative learning communities in public schools and

served as a school improvement coach. He also worked on school projects with the Knowledge Works Foundation and the National Council of La Raza.

From 2009 to 2013, Rico was executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics, where he developed policy, planned strategic initiatives, and led outreach and communications for the President's education agenda.

In this position, Rico designed and organized White House policy summits, advised U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and other senior administration officials in the development of policy priorities, and spoke on behalf of the White House with national and local media.

Illinois CSI is a partnership between ISBE and the American Institutes for Research (AIR). The Illinois CSI mission is "to lead the delivery of high-quality, research-based regional and statewide services designed to raise student performance by increasing district-level capacity for exceptional teaching and learning."

Dec. 27 deadline looms on referenda

Friday, Dec. 27, is the last day for school boards to adopt a resolution to put public policy questions on the March 18, 2014, primary ballot (10 ILCS 5/28-2).

Thursday, Jan. 9, 2014, is the last day for the board secretary to certify public policy questions to the election authority for referendum at the March 18, 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_1314.pdf.

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**

Inspirational elementary instructor named teacher of year

A second-grade teacher from Sandwich is the 2014 Illinois Teacher of the Year. Pam Reilly of Woodbury Elementary School in Sandwich Community Unit School District 430 was announced as this year's top educator Oct. 19 at the 39th annual Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year banquet in Normal.

"Pam's passion for teaching and her enthusiasm for helping her students succeed is so genuine and sincere that students are immediately drawn to her," said State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch. "She really inspires her students, their parents and her colleagues and I'm confident Pam will be an excellent representative of Illinois teachers."

Now in her 12th year of teaching, Reilly is recognized as a collaborator and a leader by her colleagues in the Sandwich district, home of six schools serving more than 2,300 students in northern Illinois. She seeks advice and guidance from teachers in the higher grades so that she can help her students be prepared for the challenges they will face after they leave her classroom.

Colleague and third grade teacher Doni Morgan says Reilly is "the perfect blend of light heartedness and commitment." She stresses that students are in control of their own learn-

ing and that although she may do the planning and preparation for the school day, it is the students who are doing the important work.

Reilly understands the importance of addressing a child's social, emotional as well as academic needs. She advocates for hungry students, those with absent parents, financially stressed families and students who need to be more challenged. She believes that all children, regardless of their circumstances, can thrive and learn.

A graduate of Aurora University with a Bachelor of Science in education, Reilly also holds a Master of Education from National-Louis University. She is a continuous participant in all types of professional development and is constantly researching and planning engaging and relevant lessons.

During reading exercises, Reilly likes to use different voices and personas for specific characters and books. Her students instantly recognize which book they are about to read based on her voice and they get ready to learn.

A former second grade student describes Reilly's teaching in this way: "She kept us focused so we wouldn't



Pam Reilly

think of the things we didn't need to know. She taught us the things we do need to know," the student wrote in her nominating letter. "Mrs. Reilly also kept us motivated. She made us very intelligent."

More than 180 nominations for Those Who Excel were reviewed and scored three times by a selection committee comprised of administrators, teachers and school board members. Principals, faculty, parents and students submit letters on behalf of candidates as part of the nomination process.

The finalists for Teacher of the Year were interviewed and videotaped, and those interviews were scored again before going to State Superintendent Koch for a final decision.

As Illinois Teacher of the Year, Reilly will have opportunities to share her knowledge and expertise outside the classroom. Beginning in the 2014 spring semester, she will be available to speak at teaching workshops, educational conferences and community meetings. She will represent Illinois at the NASA Space Camp in Huntsville, Ala., and in the National Teacher of the Year program sponsored by the Council of Chief State School Officers, ING and Target.

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

PENSION *from page 1*

the bill on Dec. 5 and it is now PA 98-0599, and will become effective on June 1, 2014. A lawsuit likely will be filed to challenge the constitutionality of the new law.

The major components of the bill for participants of the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) include a reduction in the amount of the annual Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for both current TRS annuitants and current employees participating in TRS; a suspension of the COLA in varying degrees

for current employees upon their retirement; a gradual increase in the retirement age for current employees under the age of 46; and a pensionable salary cap for Tier I employees (those hired before January 1, 2011) equal to that of Tier II employees (hired after January 1, 2011).

A fierce pension reform debate has raged for the past three years while Gov. Pat Quinn has made pension reform a top priority and both Senate President John Cullerton and Speaker Madigan

have called for a "pension fix." Madigan mentioned several times in debate on the House floor that Senate Republican Leader Christine Radogno (R-Lemont) and House Republican Leader Jim Durkin (R-Western Springs) put their stamp on the agreed legislation.

Further details about the pension reform bill are available online at <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/bill-status.asp?DocNum=1&GAID=12&GA=98&DocTypeID=SB&LegID=68366&SessionID=87&SpecSess=1>.

School boards express concern for pension fairness

The Illinois Association of School Boards (IASB) would not support any reform legislation seeking a “cost shift” of the teacher pension burden onto local school districts in the wake of the state’s failure to meet its own payment obligations to the teacher retirement system.

Representatives from more than 390 Illinois school districts considered that proposal among 14 new resolutions on public school issues in a meeting of the Association’s annual Delegate Assembly. The assembly was held in conjunction with the 2013 Joint Annual Conference, Nov. 22-24, in Chicago.

In addition to voting on resolutions, the delegates also voted to elect a new president and vice president.

The pension reform resolution was submitted by **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**. The proposal sought legislation to resolve Illinois’ current pension crisis “in a way that is fully compliant with prevailing actuarial science standards to achieve fully funded and sustainable state pension funds,” according to the sponsor.

The rationale behind the resolution states that Illinois’ pension problem can only be truly solved by addressing the state’s failure to: a) meet its financial obligations and b) adhere to actuarial principles when expanding pension benefits.

Officers elected

The new president of the Association is Karen Fisher, who also serves on the **Ottawa THSD 140** board of education. The new vice president is Phil Pritzker, a member of the **Wheeling CCSD 21** school board. Both will serve one-year terms.

A former teacher at Marseilles Elementary School, Fisher has served on her local board since 1979, and served on IASB’s Board of Directors from 2007 to 2011. She has served as IASB vice president for the past two years. She succeeds Carolyne Brooks, a member of the **West Richland CUSD**



Newly elected President Karen Fisher of **Ottawa THSD 140** (right) gave a gavel to past president Carolyne Brooks of **West Richland CUSD 2**, Noble.

2 board, who served as Association president for the past two years.

Pritzker has been a member of the **Wheeling CCSD 21** board since 1989. He has been on the IASB board of directors since 2009, representing the Association’s North Cook Division.

In noting that she had attended meetings in every corner of the state during her tenure as IASB president, Brooks said “I have been impressed with the passion you all have for our efforts to preserve our democracy.”

Accepting the nomination, Fisher said: “I am greatly honored and very happy to accept the office of IASB president and I look forward to the challenges we will face in leading this great organization into its next century.”

Delegates also heard from IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy. In his annual report, Eddy said “I am more optimistic than ever that together we can provide the leadership that will result in the best quality education possible for all of our children attending Illinois public schools.”

Representatives also approved a resolution seeking to regulate state-authorized “virtual” charter schools. The aim is to ensure that such schools, which would allow students to attend school entirely online, meet the full needs of Illinois students and follow the intent of the current state laws. Currently, virtual schools could draw the same amount of public funds from local school districts as if they were brick and mortar schools, taking the equivalent of 75 to 125 percent of the



School board delegates from across the state voted on key proposals to set direction for IASB in the coming year. More than 390 delegates participated.



The new president of IASB is Karen Fisher of Ottawa and the new vice president is Phil Pritzker of Wheeling.

local district tuition.

The IASB resolution addresses concerns that arose in February when 18 Illinois school districts received petitions from what appeared to be a not-for-profit organization seeking to operate an online “virtual” charter school for students throughout the 18 districts. The petitions revealed, however, that management of curriculum, teachers and student assessment was to be outsourced to a for-profit education firm that was the subject of extensive complaints and investigations in several states.

In the spring, all 18 districts rejected the chartering petition, raising questions as to whether the proposal met the spirit and intent of the current charter school law requirement demanding a not-for-profit operation. The state has since placed a one-year moratorium on the virtual charter school process.

Terry Hall, a board member of **Woodland CCSD 50**, Gurnee, and the sponsoring school district, said the

See **ASSEMBLY** on page 12

Student achievement main focus of Burroughs Award winner

Brenda Murphy, board president of **Des Plaines CCSD 62**, was named the winner of the 2013 Thomas Lay Burroughs Award.

The Illinois State Board of Education's Vinni Hall and Curt Bradshaw presented the award on Nov. 24 during the final day of the IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference. In introducing the Burroughs Award winner, Bradshaw commented on the difficult duties facing school board presidents.

"This is a position that requires tough decisions and many sleepless nights," he said.

Murphy was nominated by district Superintendent Jane Westerhold, district superintendent, and her fellow board members for the Burroughs Award, which honors the state's top school board president.

In their nomination letter, Murphy's colleagues referred to her as a "visionary leader who exhibits the utmost courage, integrity, and tenacity."

Murphy credited District 62 accomplishments to the strong teamwork exhibited by members of the local board of education who share her belief that their primary focus must be on student achievement.

Her formula for success is exemplified by the decline in the district's achievement gap from 28 to 14 percent during an eight-year period from 2004 to 2012.



Brenda Murphy

"This award may have my name on it, but it took a team to win this award. This honor is for the entire District 62 Board of Education," Murphy said.

"Over the years we have had to make some really tough decisions, but the input from everyone has allowed us to make those difficult decisions. We speak with one voice and we work together for our children."

Under Murphy's leadership the board has gone above and beyond required standards. The District 62 board of education has adopted Guiding Principles for Teaching and Learning, identifying 21st Century competencies and skills that students should possess.

She said the district has also been ahead of the curve in putting in place the Charlotte Danielson Framework for evaluating teachers, and the Professional Learning Communities Framework, and as an early adopter of the

Common Core State Standards.

A passionate advocate for early childhood education, Murphy led the way for the development of an Early Learning Center that now serves over 600 early learning students, including English Language Learners, special needs students, and at-risk youth.

Murphy thanked her family, the District 62 board, and the Des Plaines community for the achievement. "We have such a wonderful district and community. It is so exciting to be involved with people doing such wonderful things for our children," she said.

Murphy has served nine of her 14 years on the District 62 board as president.

CCSD 62 serves more than 5,000 K-8 grade students in the Des Plaines and Rosemont communities. The district educates students in 11 buildings and provides Early Learning Centers at three locations throughout the district.

The Burroughs Award for extraordinary educational leadership was created in 1991 in memory of the late chairman of ISBE who also served as president of the **Collinsville CUSD 10** Board of Education.

'Indispensable' board secretary receives 5th annual Holly Jack Award

Pam Burgesson, board secretary and administrative assistant to the superintendent of **Geneva CUSD 304**, was honored as the recipient of the fifth annual Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award during the third general session of the 2013 IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference.

The Holly Jack Award recognizes the demanding work of school district and board secretaries. Nominees must demonstrate performance, initiative, innovation, staff development, self-improvement, passion, and dedication.

District 304 Superintendent Kent Mutchter and school board members nominated Burgesson for the award,



Holly Jack Award winner Pam Burgesson (center) of Geneva is congratulated by friend and co-worker Cookie Olson, left, and daughter Marnie Kane, right.

referring to her work for the district as "indispensable." In the nominating letter endorsing Burgesson for the honor, the board of education com-

mented on her "poise, responsiveness and utmost professional attitude" during her service to the district.

"It is very gratifying to know that the board members, administrators, and coworkers who nominated me believe that I demonstrate the qualities and characteristics exhibited by Holly Jack," Burgesson said on Sunday, Nov. 24, at the Third General Session of the conference. "I have gotten a glory in the work that I do and I hope that each of you get a glory, too. I'm honored to be the 2013 recipient of the Holly Jack Outstanding Achievement Award and to be part of IASB's

See **HOLLY JACK** on page 11

CONFERENCE *from page 1*

ment and Labor Law,” and “Eliminating the Salary Schedule.”

Legislation, school safety, student discipline, classroom technology, school finance, negotiations, and teacher evaluations were among the most popular panels. This year, for the first time, the conference offered board members the opportunity to fulfill their state requirement for PDLT and PERA training by attending three of 11 specified panel sessions. Teachers attending as guests or as board members were also able to get CPDU credits.

Many of the handouts from panel sessions were also made available online.

Another 850 board members attended one of seven pre-conference workshops on subjects that included PDLT and PERA, governance, finance, and leadership skills. Specific professional development was also offered to school attorneys, superintendents and school business officials. School board secretaries also had a two-day strand of training events designed specifically for those who serve as elected or employed board secretaries.

This year, 390 districts sent representatives to the IASB Delegate Assembly, to vote on 14 resolutions, elect officers, and to hear reports from the president and executive director of the Association.

IASB also used this year’s conference to celebrate its 100th anniversary. A variety of events, special signage and staging, and other activities were held to commemorate the centennial. IASB was founded on Dec. 13, 1913, in Quincy, Illinois.

The keynote speakers at the General Sessions were another conference highlight. They included David Warlick, Tony Wagner and Earl Morse. The general sessions were also where awards were given out for the Invitational Exhibition of Educational Environments (school design), risk management, and individual awards for school board president, superintendent, school business official, and board secretary.

Centennial observances at conference: from murals and videos to contests, gifts

Numerous events have been held to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the Illinois Association of School Boards. Many of these took place Nov. 22-24 at the 2013 Joint Annual Conference.

This year’s conference, held a century after the Association was formed in 1913, invited members to participate in the following activities:

On Friday, the longest-serving board members by division were honored at the First General Session. On Friday and Saturday, all board members and district staff were invited to visit the Centennial photo booth in the Exhibit Hall. There was no charge for this souvenir photo shoot.

On Friday and Saturday, the IASB Information Room (Comiskey Room) was decorated to reflect the anniversary atmosphere. A pictorial mural highlighted milestones from each decade in the Association’s 100-year history.

Free coffee, soda, water and cookies were served and free mouse pads and luggage tags were given away. Visitors also had an opportunity to view local district video greetings, sign the IASB anniversary cards and register for a chance to win a Centennial Collection package of commemorative gifts. IASB staff and directors were also on hand to visit with guests and demonstrate Association services and products.

On Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the IASB bookstore offered a variety of Centennial commemorative



The IASB Information Room reflected an anniversary atmosphere with a mural and greeting cards.

gifts. The sale featured coasters, koozies, mugs, visors, key chains, license plate frames, pedometers, yardsticks, ornaments, and baby bibs.

The conference activities were in addition to a year-long celebration that began Jan. 1.

The Association’s 100-year history, which has been reported in a series of articles in *The Illinois School Board Journal* and daily factoids on the IASB website, will also be compiled in a commemorative book to be published in 2014. This book, featuring interviews with past executive directors, past presidents, long-serving board members, and long-serving employees, will be distributed at no charge to all members.

In addition, from now until the end of the year IASB is sponsoring an online trivia contest to test navigation skills and Association history knowledge. Participants can qualify to win a free book from the online bookstore or a free course from the online learning center.

Winners announced in conference bingo game as gift cards are sent to winners listed online

Winners of \$75 Visa gift cards have been chosen in a conference Bingo Game sponsored by IASB Service Associates. Names were drawn on Sat., Nov. 23, in the exhibit hall from the 149 cards submitted by Bingo players.

Bingo cards were included in the

2013 conference program; players had to have each of the 17 sponsor squares initialed by the participating exhibitor before turning in their bingo card.

A \$75 gift card is being mailed mid-December to each of the 18 winners listed on the IASB website at www.isab.com/jac13/bingo.cfm.

Stewart says her family key to winning Superintendent of Year honor

Kelly Stewart, district superintendent at **Benton CHSD 103**, was honored Nov. 23 during the second general session of the Conference as 2014 Illinois Superintendent of the Year.

Chosen annually by the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA), the award for this year was presented on Saturday at the Conference in Chicago. As the Illinois winner, Stewart is eligible for the National Superintendent of the Year Award from the National Association of School Administrators.

An educator for 30 years, Stewart has spent the past 12 years as superintendent of the Benton district. She said her main goals in life have been to make a difference and to make her parents proud of her.

“This honor is the ultimate pat on the back for a job well done and the fact that it comes from my peers gives it great significance. While I am humbled to be the one to hold the title, it represents all of us that work tirelessly for the children of Illinois daily.”

Stewart said she believes superintendents are unsung heroes, and “there’s no one I would rather be in a foxhole with than my fellow superintendents.”

IASA President Steve Webb, superintendent of **Goreville CUSD1**, introduced Stewart by saying she has accomplished much in the Benton district since becoming superintendent in 2001, including: implementing a READ 180 program that greatly improved reading capabilities of some students by providing them with 90 minutes of reading instruction daily; upgrading and remodeling the district’s 40-year-old buildings to make them safer and more comfort-



The Superintendent of the Year Award goes to Kelly Stewart, presented by IASA Executive Director Brent Clark, left, and IASA President Steve Webb, right.

able and to equip them with state of the art technology; offering more dual-credit classes than ever before; and providing financial stability through

innovative leadership

The granddaughter of Russian immigrants who had limited education, Stewart said she credited the education she received at Benton High School for her opportunities, and for being a great equalizer in her family.

“It is also important to note that it has been an honor to work with the school board members and presidents, past and present in my own district: thanks to you all,” Stewart said.

Panel proposals sought from member school boards for presentations at 2014 conference

A select number of school districts and organizations will be chosen to make panel presentations at the 82nd Joint Annual Conference in November 2014.

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. 14, 2014. 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://www.iasb.com/jac14/rfp2014.cfm>. (to be submitted electronically) or <http://www.iasb.com/jac14/rfp2014.pdf>. (to be printed, filled out and submitted by mail or FAX).

Panel handout materials available via Members-Only website at no cost

Handouts from 78 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 panel title and hotel/room name. Most panels appear in chronological order of the conference; by day and time slot.

Access is free but 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>.

Tribute to meetings manager Culler honors 50 years on staff

In a tribute marking half a century of service with the Illinois Association of School Boards, Patricia Culler was honored by her family, friends, and colleagues on Nov. 22 during the first day of the 81st Joint Annual Conference in Chicago.

During a humorous and at times emotional ceremony, co-workers spoke highly of her dedication to IASB and her instrumental role in putting together the Annual Conference.

“Pat Culler is one of the individuals responsible for putting together the premier conference in the nation,” said Executive Director Roger Eddy. “She is the heart and soul of IASB. To think about what she has accomplished is unbelievable. She is leaving quite a legacy.”

Patrick Donnelly, general manager of the Hyatt Regency Chicago, also spoke highly of Pat’s role in putting together the IASB/IASA/IASBO Joint Annual Conference for most of the past 50 years. “She is instrumental in making this happen. Everybody who works in this hotel knows her by name,



Among the many well wishers on hand to honor Culler were IASB Executives past and present. Michael D. Johnson, Hal Seaman, and current Executive Director Roger Eddy flank Culler.

from the front to the back of the house. She will always be part of our family.”

Two former IASB executive directors were also in attendance to honor Pat’s legacy with the Association. Hal Seamon spoke about when he first met Pat in the fall of 1972 at the Sherman House, a previous site of the conference. “She has made all of our jobs easier. I had a wonderful time working with her.”

Former executive director Michael D. Johnson commented on her continuing efforts to keep the conference affordable for board members: “I don’t think school board members realize

what she has done. Because of her work she saves thousands of dollars for each board that sends members to conference,” said Johnson.

Pat was hired by IASB on July 6, 1964 and will retire on June 30, 2014, capping 50 years of loyal work on behalf of the Association. Culler currently serves as assistant to the executive director, as well as director of the meetings management department. She holds a unique place in Association history, having worked for all six of IASB’s full-time executive directors.

A number of Culler’s relatives were on hand to participate in the celebration, including her brother, Mal, who offered some entertaining childhood stories. “She’s no saint you know. There wasn’t a boy in the neighborhood she couldn’t whip,” Mal said over audience laughter. “I’m proud to be your brother and I love you.”

Culler closed the night with some inspirational words to her family and

See **CULLER** on page 10

IASB bids farewell to long-time dedicated staff, adds two new ones

At the end of December, IASB will say goodbye to long-time administrative assistant Judy Niezgoda.

Niezgoda has spent 37 years with IASB, working in the Lombard office. She joined the staff in January 1977, helping coordinate division and program functions for many years, and handling department inquiries. She most recently assisted Field Services Director Barbara Toney.

Niezgoda has also served as office manager in Lombard since 2006, coordinating office functions and scheduling and working with vendors.

Mary Anne Blythe will be joining the IASB staff on January 6 as a secretary in the Lombard office supporting Toney, the field services team and the DuPage, Lake and North Cook Divisions, according to Cathy Talbert, asso-



Judy Niezgoda receives a plaque for her 37 years on staff from the man who hired her, former director Hal Seamon.

ciate executive director for field services and policy services.

In other news, Kara Kienzler has accepted the position of assistant director of production services. This is a new position in Springfield that combines positions of senior director of

production services and graphics supervisor. She started Nov. 4.

Kienzler worked in the communications department for the Illinois Association of Realtors for nine years, serving as communications production coordinator/webmaster.

Her duties at IASB will include coordinating the design and layout of all print publications and communications, typesetting and production of all printed materials.

Kienzler is taking over many of the duties of Ruth Ann Ferris, now a part-time graphics consultant who was formerly in charge of typesetting and conducting layout and production tasks on IASB’s Springfield staff for more than 20 years, and Diane Cape, who retired as senior director of production services after 37 years of dedicated service.

Professional development participation at conference results in CPDU, PDLT credits

Certified Illinois teachers who were either registered conference attendees (board members) or registered guests of attendees were able to receive Continuing Professional Development Units (CPDU) for their participation in the 2013 Joint Annual Conference.

This year, 198 teachers took advantage of the offer. An additional 652 school board members used the annual conference to complete their four-hour Professional Development Leadership training requirement and received an official certificate of completion.

The State Teachers Certification Board has approved IASB as a certified CPDU provider for the annual conference. That means that any certified Illinois teacher who was registered as a conference attendee or a guest may receive 12 CPDU credits for attending the full conference.

There is no cost to board members; however, there is a \$50 handling

charge for non-board members who qualified for CPDUs and attended the conference as guests.

The completed CPDU Evaluation form (ISBE form 77-21A) may still be returned to qualify for credit. Forms should be sent to IASB as soon as possible, Attn: Judy Williams, 2921 Baker Drive, Springfield, IL, 62703.

This year, board members also were able to complete their state-mandated four hour Professional Development Leadership Training (PDLT) along with Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA) training at the conference, either during a pre-conference workshop or by attending three panel sessions out of 11 designated offerings; one from each of three topic categories offered.

The pre-conference workshop satisfied the requirement for 292 members, while 360 attendees met the mandate through the selected panels. Certificates were distributed directly to members at the conference.

Five more state-mandated training sessions planned for coming two months by IASB

IASB will offer five Professional Development Leadership Training sessions this winter. These will be the final IASB regional workshops for school board members to receive their state mandated training within the required 12-month period following their April 2013 election.

These sessions cost \$150 per person, which includes materials and meals. They will run from 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at various dates and locations.

Those dates and locations are as follows:

January 11, Renaissance Center, Joliet

February 1, Illinois Central College, East Peoria

February 8, Northern Illinois University, Naperville

February 15, Holiday Inn Conference Center, Carbondale

February 22, Prairie State College, Chicago Heights

Advance registration is required. Registration must be received two days prior to each workshop. Registration forms with payment information should be mailed to IASB. Online registration is also available at: <https://www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm>.

NEWS FROM IASB

Annual Report

Each year IASB publishes an Annual Report that reviews activities of the previous fiscal year, outlines services available to member districts, and identifies staff members who deliver various services.

The latest Annual Report is expected to be posted online soon. The document contains data to show the level of member activities and participation in IASB, plus the services provided by the Association, and the cost of doing business for the fiscal year just past.

Conference survey online

Joint Annual Conference attendees are invited to share their opinions of their experience at the event in a brief online evaluation survey.

The aim of the survey, which is set to close Dec. 31, is to get an overview of conference goers' perceptions, and gather information that may help IASB staff with planning conference panel session and other events. The survey was posted Nov. 25. The link to this survey can be found at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/KWZYRY7>.

Centennial gifts on sale

For as long as they last, IASB has several remaining gift items available for sale to commemorate the Association's 2013 Centennial. All of the gift items that were available at the Joint Annual Conference bookstore are now for sale online, with special pricing for bundles of seven.

Items include: drink koozie, ceramic coffee mug, beverage coaster set, keychain, license plate holder, pedometer, visor, and grandma or grandpa baby bibs. Each gift item features the IASB 1913-2013 Centennial logo.

School districts file 70 state waiver requests

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) reports it received 70 requests from school districts between March 1 and October 1 seeking waivers of School Code mandates, 59 of which were forwarded to the General Assembly for consideration. The agency approved five of the requests, while six others were either withdrawn or were returned because no waiver was needed in order to carry out the requested activity.

The largest number of applications (27 requests) sought waivers from the state's non-resident tuition requirement, with 26 of those being sent to lawmakers while one was withdrawn or returned.

The second-largest category of applications (13 requests) was a tie between drivers education (eight of which sought to raise fees) and physical education waivers.

Four of the 13 drivers' education requests were granted and the rest were forwarded to the legislature. In contrast, none of the daily physical education requirement waiver requests was granted by ISBE, with all 13 being forwarded to lawmakers.

An additional six applications sought waivers on school improvement or in-service training requirements, and all of those were forwarded to the General Assembly for consideration. Four school holiday waiver applications were returned because no waiver was needed on those requests.

Other waiver applications included: three requests on limitation of administrative costs due to circumstances beyond the district's control; two requests on parent-teacher conferences (one of which was withdrawn), one request regarding school food programs, which was approved; and one request for a waiver of state graduation requirements, which was sent to lawmakers.

The latter request is to allow a school district to permit students in grades 7 and 8 to take math courses required for high school graduation at the middle school, as opposed to taking them at the high school, provided that such courses are taught by an educator-licensed high school teacher.

The district said that this waiver would increase curricular opportunities for middle school students

without affecting high school students' scheduling choices. If granted by the state legislature, this waiver would take effect in the 2014-15 school year.

A school district may request a waiver or modification of the mandates of state laws or regulations when the district demonstrates it can meet the intent in a "more effective, efficient, or economical manner or when necessary to stimulate or improve student performance." If the state board fails to disapprove a request, that request is deemed granted. But even requests that are turned down may be appealed to the legislature, which sometimes reverses the state's administrative rulings.

Both houses of the legislature will consider the proposals in the spring session. Districts will be notified as waiver requests are accepted or rejected.

IASB pushed for passage of the waiver law in 1995. More than 5,500 waiver requests have been approved since the law went into effect in March 1995.

Any questions can be directed to ISBE's Rules and Waivers Division at (217) 782-5270 or waivers@isbe.net.

Summary of new laws and changes relevant to schools set for mailing

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 governmental relations department for 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, nor is the publication intended as a substitute for 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.

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.

CULLER, from page 8

fellow co-workers in attendance, stating: "I think back to the people in Quincy who started this (IASB). They knew children need a quality education, because it provides a transition for people to make a better living

for their families. It's a bridge. A bridge we each help build.

"IASB has given me chances to become something that I never thought I could have," said Culler. "My family, they are the ones I owe this to,"

she added.

Nearly 200 people crowded into the ballroom to thank Pat for her service. The reception was sponsored in partnership with the Hyatt Regency Chicago and IASB.

Bloomington (Nov. 8, *The Pantagraph*) Bloomington schools, seeking to fill their substitute teacher pool, recently held a regional substitute job fair in Bloomington for districts in DeWitt, Livingston and McLean counties. Regional Superintendent Mark Jontry said several districts have asked for help because they are experiencing a shortage of subs, and the regional fair made it easy for both districts and potential candidates, who could get fingerprinted, fill out forms, meet representatives from several school districts and learn about fees and requirements.

Chicago (Nov. 28, *Chicago Tribune*) After a divisive teachers strike and painful school closings, Chicago District 299 is hoping for up to \$30 million in federal funding to arrive through the competitive Race to the Top grant program. The U.S. Department of Education announced in November that CPS was one of 31 finalists for the district-level competition that provides funding aimed at improving student learning, closing

the achievement gap and improving the skills of teachers at school systems throughout the country.

East Aurora (Nov. 5, *Aurora Beacon News*) Aurora East USD 131 has formed a nine-member committee to study what curriculum should be taught to the kindergarteners who will attend the district's new full-day program next fall. The committee will be made up of five kindergarten teachers, the district's director of elementary education, the assistant principal from Brady Elementary, the assistant principal of the Child Service Center — where preschool is taught — and the principal at Oak Park Elementary, which has the largest early childhood program among the district's elementary schools.

Fairview Heights (Nov. 5, *Belleville News-Democrat*) The school board at Grant School District 110 in Fairview Heights has taken preliminary steps to place a tax referendum on the ballot for the March primary. Without the increase, school officials say Dis-

trict 110 will close. "We have to have the increase," District 110 Superintendent Matt Stines said. "Without it, we are not going to survive." If it doesn't pass, he said he'll file paperwork with the St. Clair Regional Office of Education to dissolve the district, which includes Illini Elementary School and Grant Middle School in Fairview Heights.

Norridge (Nov. 18, Press Release) Upgrades to lighting and infrastructure at Ridgewood High School have cut energy costs by 18 percent and significantly reduced noise from nearby O'Hare International Airport. The infrastructure upgrades were implemented by Trane, and were selected both for their energy saving and noise abatement potential. District leaders funded the improvements with a noise abatement grant from the Federal Department of Aviation and Chicago Department of Aviation. Improvements included installing double-pane windows and a multi-layer roof structure to reduce noise infiltration and conserve energy.

Lake Forest's Albus receives Everett Award for business management from IASBO

Allen Albus, deputy superintendent of finance and operations for **Lake Forest Elementary School District 67** and **Lake Forest High School District 115**, was recognized during the Third General Session of the 81st Joint Annual Conference as the winner of the 2013 Ronald E. Everett Distinguished Service Award.



Allen Albus

Each year, the award is presented to commemorate Everett's 24 years of dedicated service as executive director of Illinois

ASBO and his accomplishments in the school business management profession.

The Illinois Association of School Business Officials present the award to an individual who has exhibited "diligence, superior performance, and achievements in service to the school business public" throughout their career.

Unfortunately, Albus was unable to attend the award presentation. In presenting the Everett Award, Illinois ASBO President Hillarie Siena described Allen as "one of the best and brightest in the profession. He is a mentor, a friend and a leader."

HOLLY JACK, from page 5

100th Anniversary celebration."

Burgeson noted that she has personally benefitted from the publications and materials of IASB for over a quarter of a century, listing as "particularly helpful" the *Illinois School Board Newsbulletin* and *The Illinois School Board Journal*, and the *Guide to Successful School Board Meetings*.

Burgeson was chosen from a group of 35 nominees to receive the award. She has served as administrative assistant to four superintendents, worked with 31 individual school board members on her local board and attended more than 750 school board meetings for District 304. Burgeson plans to retire in June of next year after 33 years.

Winter governing meeting coming up in one IASB division in new year

Four IASB divisions scheduled winter governing meetings, where board members can help division officers and IASB field services staff identify programming needs for the fall and spring division meetings, and get updates on other Association events. Meetings were held in the Blackhawk, Central Illinois Valley and Two Rivers Divisions during December. Shawnee Division

will meet on Jan. 9.

Each meeting features a director's report, resolution chair report, and discussion of topics, dates and locations of future division dinner meetings.

Registration is now available on the IASB website by clicking on the "Register Online" link for the final governing meeting at <http://www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm>.

Online Learning Center's 2013 conference raffle proclaims four free course winners

In other 2013 Conference action, four names were drawn at random in the raffle for the LeaderShop Online Learning Center. This promotion was held in the IASB Information Room. The winners chosen were:

- John Applen, **Morton CUSD 709**
- R. Dale Evans, **Joliet THSD 204**
- Fred Huddlestun, **Jasper Co. CUSD 1**
- Kelly Kampwerth, **Aviston SD 21**

These board members will receive free registration for one Online Learning Center course and may choose from the following: Open Meetings Act Training, PERA, PERA/PDLT,

School District Labor Relations, Superintendent Evaluation, and Introduction to Parliamentary Procedure and Media Relations.

The winning entries were drawn from among the more than 800 people who visited the IASB Information Room (Comiskey Room, Hyatt West Tower) on Friday and Saturday.

Click on this link for more information about the LeaderShop Online Learning Center: <http://www.iasb.com/training/onlinelearning.cfm>. Or for course descriptions or information on how the center works, visit http://www.iasb.com/training/onlinelearning_how.cfm.

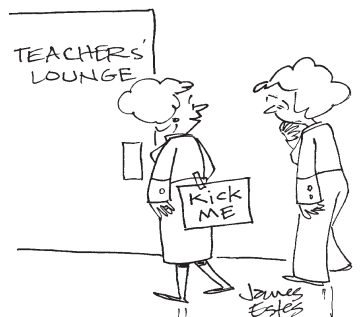
ASSEMBLY from page 4

state should be funding any schools they establish "in the same way they fund the Illinois Math and Science Academy," a state-authorized school in Aurora, Illinois.

A total of 15 resolutions were submitted; 14 new proposals and one amendment. Others reaffirmed existing position statements. Local member districts are encouraged to draft and submit proposals in the spring. After a committee reviews them and offers its recommendations, the delegate assembly votes on the resolutions. Those approved are used by IASB and other school management supporters to establish an agenda for

their lobbying efforts.

A list of the Association's official Position Statements can be found at <http://iasb.com/govrel/positions.cfm>.



"You know, it has taken a long time, but I've finally gotten that bunch of mine under control."

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 9 – Shawnee Division Winter Governing Meeting, Marion

January 11 – Professional Development Leadership Training and Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PDLT and PERA), Joliet

January 21-22 – IASB/IASA Professional Advancement Seminar, Springfield

February 1 – South Cook Winter Meeting, Lemont

February 1 – Professional Development Leadership Training and Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PDLT and PERA), East Peoria

February 8 – Professional Development Leadership Training and Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PDLT and PERA), Naperville

February 15 – Professional Development Leadership Training and Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PDLT and PERA), Carbondale

February 21-22 – IASB Board of Directors' meeting, Chicago

February 22 – Professional Development Leadership Training and Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PDLT and PERA), Chicago Heights

February 25 – Shawnee Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Cairo

February 25 – Abe Lincoln Division Spring Dinner Meeting, To be determined

February 26 – Southwestern Division Spring Dinner Meeting, To be determined

February 27 – Illini Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Homer

March 4 – Wabash Valley Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Casey