

Illinois SCHOOL BOARD Newsbulletin

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Leaders of six statewide education organizations jointly announced their commitment to support the Vision 20/20 plan. Shown at left is Illinois Association of School Administrators Executive Director Brent Clark. To the right of Clark is IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy.

Conference draws 82 percent of all Illinois districts for training

More than 82 percent of the state's 855 public school districts were represented at the 2014 Joint Annual Conference, Nov. 21-23 in Chicago.

The 82nd meeting of the Illinois Association of School Boards, Illinois Association of School Administrators and Illinois Association of School Business Officials drew a final registered attendance of 8,462. When the 1,181 exhibitors are included, total attendance again topped 10,000.

Those registered included 4,019 guests, 2,998 board members, 1,545 administrators, as well as board secretaries, school attorneys, regional and state education officials, and other education sector representatives.

Professional development is the primary purpose of the conference, offered through 267 exhibit booths, 104 panel sessions, 31 "carousel" panels, nine pre-conference workshops, five school tours, three general sessions, as well as the IASB Delegate Assembly, bookstore, and other learning and networking opportunities.

Three panel sessions reached "Standing Room Only" capacity, including a Saturday afternoon legislative

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Vision 20/20 partners announce plan to fulfill promise of public education

Illinois Vision 20/20 was officially launched on Nov. 21 at the IASB/IASA/Illinois ASBO Joint Annual Conference.

Vision 20/20 is the product of a two-year partnership among the IASB, the Illinois Association of School Administrators, the Illinois Principals Association, the Illinois Association of School Business Officials, the Illinois Association of Regional Superintendents of Schools, and the Superintendent's Commission for the Study of Demographics and Diversity.

Through the Vision 20/20 process, four areas for prioritization emerged: highly effective educators, 21st century learning, shared accountability, and equitable and adequate funding. Insiders refer to this as the four pillars

of the process.

Members of the coalition said there is no clear dollar amount on the cost to implement all of their ideas. But some of their ideas, such as including current educators on the Illinois State Board of Education or creating teacher licensure reciprocity agreements with surrounding states, could be done without incurring any costs for the state.

After a series of events to unveil the plan held last month in Chicago and this month at regional meetings throughout the state, members of the coalition said they hope to bring more associations and education groups on board and to see movement on some of their ideas in the Illinois legislature during the spring legislative session.

See **VISION 20/20** on page 8

Also see other stories on
Conference starting
on page 4

Reorganization feasibility

The State Board ISBE is accepting agreements for fiscal year 2015 School District Reorganization Feasibility Study funding. Feasibility studies are a tool to be used by school districts to investigate the pros and cons of reorganization options. Interested districts should submit a proposed agreement with an independent contractor(s) to their Regional Office of Education (ROE) or to Intermediate Service Center (ISC) in Cook County. The agreement will then be forwarded to ISBE for approval. Each study will get funding of between \$4,500 and \$8,000. Procedures, funding allotment, and sample forms are available at www.isbe.net/sfms/html/feasibility.htm. To learn more, contact Michelle Heninger, School Business Services, at (217) 785-8779 or mheninge@isbe.net.

Alternate bus fuels

The Illinois EPA has two funding programs for alternate-fueled school district buses. The Illinois Alternate Fuels Rebate Program, which covers districts or bus companies statewide, will provide up to \$4,000 for the purchase of new natural gas, propane or electric buses or support vehicles. Conversions are included. Funding is available to use biodiesel (at least 20 percent blend) in a fleet of existing diesel school buses. This is not a competitive grant program, and districts/bus companies that meet the eligibility requirements will receive a rebate. Additionally, the Chicago Area Green Fleet Grant Program in the six-county Chicago area, will provide grants for 50 percent of the incremental purchase cost of a new natural gas or propane school bus. Conversions are included. For more on these programs, go to www.illinoisgreenfleets.org. Questions can be directed to Darwin Burkhart at 217/524-5008 or Darwin.Burkhart@illinois.gov

High school automotive instructor named Illinois Teacher of Year

An automotive teacher in Palatine, Steven Elza of William Fremd High School in **Township High School District 211**, was named the 2015 Illinois Teacher of the Year at the 40th annual Those Who Excel/Illinois Teacher of the Year banquet Oct. 27 in Normal.



Steve Elza

“Steve is an important role model both for his students, colleagues and for those individuals thinking about a career as a teacher,” said State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch. “His pathway into teaching, including his experience in being mentored, is an important story for others to hear about as the field of teaching experiences decreased enrollments.”

Elza builds relationships with his students that are often life-altering and he is known for his efforts to support each student in his classroom.

Before the end of every year, he has a one-to-one discussion with all of his students and helps them establish their high school exit strategy.

He discusses what each student’s goals are and helps them develop a plan.

A graduate of Southern Illinois University with a Bachelor of Science in automotive technology, Elza also holds two Master of Education degrees and has earned numerous other certifications. His automotive technology program has achieved National Automotive Technician Education Foundation certification.

District 211 is the first high school district in Illinois to have all of its schools achieve this distinction. Only 4 percent of all high schools in the nation achieve this certification.

“From the basic automotive technology class to the weekly Auto Club, he puts his students before many other priorities and makes many sacrifices for his students,” one former student said. “Always promoting school events and participating in any way possible, he teaches the meaning of becoming part of something bigger than yourself.”

As Illinois Teacher of the Year, he will soon be available to speak at teaching workshops, conferences and community meetings.

Program offers to aid school safety efforts

The Statewide Terrorism and Intelligence Center (STIC) School Safety Information Sharing Program is designed to identify the information needs of school and campus safety officials and ensure timely and wide dissemination of intelligence for schools’ protection. The program goal is to aid in school safety efforts through sharing key information with at least one person in every school and campus.

Administrators making safety decisions in schools are encouraged to join the information sharing service. For more information or to request an application, send an email request to: schoolsafety@isp.state.il.us

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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

Five districts using advanced emergency response service

Understanding that school emergencies, while rare, are a real concern for parents and school administrators, a new IASB sponsored program has customized its proven response solution from the business world for use in schools, namely NaviGate Prepared™.

Before the system was developed for schools, a precursor called simply NaviGate™ was already a proven advanced, web-based system giving first responders immediate access to critical information, such as maps, floor plans, emergency protocols, call lists and real-time video feeds where there are cameras. It was a well-known product in markets including healthcare, manufacturing, commercial real estate, large public venues, and higher education. But in the form originally marketed, the makers said their platform was too expensive for K-12.

The earlier product is installed in more than 1,300 locations across America and abroad, including the Willis Tower (formerly known as the Sears Tower), as well as healthcare systems, universities and commercial real estate in major cities. But since it has been adapted in a cost-effective means for schools, it is already used in more than 170 schools nationwide.

Now as IASB's newest sponsored program, it allows critical information to be accessed via any Internet-enabled device, including on-board computers in police cruisers and hand-held devices. The information is stored on secure, redundant off-site servers in the digital "cloud" and is not affected by physical barriers or on-the-ground crisis situations. Having such key resources in place before arriving at the site of an emergency can significantly reduce assessment time and expedite informed action.

"Safety and security are our highest priority in the district," said Steven Cobb, superintendent of **Quincy School District 172**. "We implemented NaviGate Prepared™ a few months ago,

and last month we began welcoming first responders into our school buildings to learn our emergency procedures."

Four other school districts in the state had previously piloted the system, including **Robinson CUSD 2**. District 2 sets various district goals each year and school safety is always a priority as they continually assess the safety and climate of their schools, according to Joshua Quick, Robinson superintendent.

"NaviGate Prepared™ is the perfect complement to the school safety measures we already have in place and enhances our overall emergency preparedness and response strategies by directly connecting our safety information with first responders," Quick said. "We have a very positive working relationship with local law enforcement and I think the implementation of this system in our district is welcomed and appreciated."

"Our covenant as parents is to do anything and everything we can to keep our kids safe," notes Bennett Fierman, president of Lauren Innovations, the firm that makes and markets the product. "We believe that NaviGate Prepared™ is an invaluable safety tool, one that helps schools mitigate threats of all kinds."

NaviGate™ had been designated as an anti-terrorism-level technology by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, and Lauren Innovations was added last year as an authorized vendor to the GSA Federal Supplier List. But the perceived need for such technology in schools drove developers to come up with this new product tailored for schools.

"The idea was to find a way to harness the technology we had already



developed in a way that is so efficient, intuitive, and easy to implement and use that it would be cost-effective for schools," explained Fierman. "We needed to make something simple and effortless to keep down the cost of training and support."

Just a little over a year ago the company launched the new version of its emergency response platform customized for pre-K through high school campuses. It provides first responders with access to critical information about a school via any internet-enabled device, including handheld devices and onboard computers in police cruisers.

"You can have all sorts of elegant technology around security and safety on a property," Fierman says, "but if it's not accessible to the responders during an emergency it has limited impact. He says that in many places schools provide site plans and floor plans and emergency plans to public agencies, but many are only marginally available to first responders during an actual emergency.

Quincy was the latest school system in Illinois to test NaviGate Prepared™. The district includes more than 7,100 students in 12 schools. Superintendent Cobb says the district began testing the system this fall and completed its pilot project with it in October.

The district is still working with Lauren on ways to improve the system. "They have been very easy to

See **NAVIGATE** on page 12



Steven Cobb



Bennet Fierman

IASB delegates agree to resolution seeking better data sharing

IASB opposes any limit on student data-sharing agreements. That was one conclusion of the Association's annual Delegate Assembly, which was held Nov. 22 in Chicago.

The member districts' determination in voting on Resolution 10 supports legislation to continue to allow local school districts to enter into the necessary student academics data-sharing agreements permitting the use of longitudinal data systems in order to improve student success.

"Educational researchers across Illinois and our nation have identified the educational benefits of the use of such longitudinal data," explained school board vice president James Gates, who spoke on behalf of sponsoring district, **Oak Park Unit District 97**.

"This resolution, while providing the necessary and appropriate student data sharing, complies with every facet of student privacy safeguards currently in General Assembly statutes," Gates noted.

Representatives from 352 Illinois school districts considered 12 new resolutions on a variety of public school issues. The assembly was held in conjunction with the 2014 Joint Annual Conference.

The measure was passed by a vote of 190-132 after extensive debate. Data sharing and student privacy have both been key issues in the General Assembly this past year. Legislation that would have greatly limited data sharing passed out of the Senate but did not make it through the House of Representatives.

Delegates who opposed the resolution were concerned that student information data systems might be subject to computer hackers and risk violating privacy protection.

"We've all seen ... [corporations] have tens of millions of [private] records stolen from them," said resolution opponent John Faustino, a board member of **Palos CCSD 118**, Palos Park. Faustino said similar cyber crimes have hit major universities and might also strike at public school record systems.



Leading the delegates in their deliberations were IASB President Karen Fisher (right) and Vice President Phil Pritzker.

The information-sharing resolution seeks legislation to continue to allow districts "to build, maintain, and utilize local longitudinal data systems in order to improve their student outcomes," according to the sponsor.

"Basically we are asking ... [to ensure that school districts can continue to share] the same kinds of information that universities share with community colleges, and universities share with high school districts," explained Dave Schwartz, a member of the **Carterville CUSD 5** Board of Education. "The best performance metric on how a school district is doing is to look at how their students do in successive years in the next level of education," he added.

Sponsors of the resolution said that children's educational development is entirely the focus of the proposal and that records can and will be encoded to make it impossible to identify individuals from the academic data being shared by schools.

An accompanying proposal, Resolution 9, was adopted without debate to specifically allow non-unit school districts to enter into agreements to share student data between high school and elementary school districts.

This year's conference was attended by nearly 9,000 school board members, administrators, board secretaries, exhibitors, school attorneys, regional, state education agencies, and guests. In addition to voting on res-

olutions, the delegates also voted on IASB officers.

Re-elected as Association president was Karen Fisher, who also serves on the **Ottawa THSD 140** board of education. Re-elected as vice president was Phil Pritzker, a member of the **Wheeling CCSD 21** school board. Both will serve a one-year term.

Representatives also approved a resolution opposing any legislative or rule-making initiatives that enact statewide student discipline policies. IASB has consistently lobbied against any effort to enact a statewide student discipline policy, in order to protect local control.

Anna Klimkiewicz, a board member in **Township HSD 211**, Palatine, which sponsored the resolution, said "we are asking districts to oppose legislation and rule-making initiatives that enacts statewide student discipline policies." But she said the larger aim was to maintain local control, allowing local schools to expedite investigations in response to anything that happens at school, including alleged student misconduct, and communicate findings and determinations to parents and guardians.

A total of 16 resolutions were submitted to school board delegates; 12 new proposals and four amendments. Others reaffirmed existing position statements.

Other resolutions approved by local school board representatives included proposals that:

- Aim to limit and equalize cost for special education student transportation in the wake of cuts in state reimbursement
- Seek to expand the use of the school facility occupation and use tax (countywide sales tax) to include purchase or lease technology that aids instruction, education or efficiency of the district
- Support changes in the Tax Increment Finance Act to prevent extending the life of a TIF beyond 23 years

See **DELEGATE** on page 12

Grant Park's Dickson wins board presidency award

Dave Dickson of **Grant Park CUSD 6** was the 2014 recipient of the Thomas Lay Burroughs Award, which annually honors an outstanding school board president in the state. Dickson has served five years as president of his local school board and more than eight years on the board.

"Under his leadership, the Grant Park district has increased student achievement and ensured more students are on track for college and careers," said State Board of Education Chairman Gery J. Chico.

Grant Park High School testing performance increased 23 percent between 2011 and 2013, earning the

state (ISBE) 2013 Academic Improvement Award for exemplary gains in performance. The Improvement Award is part of the annual recognition program, the Illinois Honor Roll.

The number of students from low-income families has increased by eight percent over the past three years in the



Dave Dickson of **Grant Park CUSD 6** received the 2014 Thomas Lay Burroughs Award.

Grant Park district, which is located in Kankakee County. The district also saw cuts to education funding during the national economic downturn in recent years. Despite these challenges, the elementary and middle school has maintained its ability to score well above state and local averages. Moreover, the three-year-composite average has reached nearly 90 percent for meeting or exceeding in math and English language arts.

"I take great pride in the village of Grant Park and particularly in the school district itself," said Dickson. "This is not just an award for me,

See **BURROUGHS** on page 6

Board secretary Sender wins Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award

A passion for professional development, excellence, and doing the most with limited resources is what sets Mary Lou Sender, administrative assistant to the superintendent and board of **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**, apart. It's also what won her the honor of being named the sixth annual recipient of the Holly Jack Outstanding Service Award at the 2014 Conference.

"In the school community, we face very high demands with few resources. Our kids deserve the best every day, and it is our duty to make sure that happens," Sender said.

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



Mary Lou Sender, of **Wheaton Warrenville CUSD 200**, received the award from IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy.

sion for public education, and dedication. Letters of support are also accepted.

District 200 Superintendent Jeff Schuler and school board members nominated Sender for the award, referring to her work for the district as "inspiring." In the nominating letter endorsing Sender for the honor, the board of education said "She looks for ways to be inspired in her own work and life, so that she can inspire others to the excellence that is her personal standard."

See **HOLLY JACK AWARD** on page 12

Bertrand named 2015 Illinois Superintendent of the Year, says 'persevere'

Thomas Bertrand, district superintendent at **Rochester CUSD 3A**, was honored Sunday afternoon during the third general session of the IASB/IASA/IASBO Conference as the 2015 Illinois Superintendent of the Year.



Thomas Bertrand, Superintendent, **Rochester CUSD 3A** took home IASA's award.

Association of School Administrators (IASA), the award was presented Nov. 23 in Chicago. As the Illinois Superintendent of the Year, Bertrand is eligible for the National Superintendent of the Year Award from the National Association of School Administrators.

Bertrand has been an educator for 28 years, serving as a teacher, coach, principal and assistant superintendent before accepting the position as Rochester superintendent in 2002. He has spent the past 13 years as superintendent of Rochester CUSD 3A.

"I look at this as recognition for our schools and our community. Our board, staff and our teachers are all marching to the same beat," said Bertrand in accepting the award.

"Kids first, high expectations, and continuous improvement," are the guiding goals that Thomas Bertrand references when speaking to the success he has seen at the Rochester school district, which is located near Springfield.

IASA President Scott Kuffel introduced Bertrand by speaking about his numerous accomplishments.

Chosen annually by the Illinois

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panel, “Funding Schools: Who Pays, Who Receives?” that drew 420 participants. Panels that attracted the highest number of visitors (100-plus) focused on legislation, teacher evaluation, collective bargaining, technology, and school finance.

There were other training opportunities as well, including an all-day school law seminar for school attorneys, two days of specialized training for school board secretaries, and nine pre-conference workshops that drew more than 800 paid participants.

The topic of community engagement was presented in several panel sessions, with perspectives provided by local district practitioners as well as IASB staff.

Teachers attending were also able to qualify for CPDU credits. And many of the panel sessions provided online handouts and PowerPoint presentations.

This year, 352 districts sent representatives to the IASB Delegate Assembly to vote on 16 resolutions, elect officers and to hear IASB reports.

The keynote speakers at the General Sessions were another conference highlight. They included John Draper, Jim Burgett and Craig Kielburger. The general sessions were also where awards were given out for school design, risk management and individual awards for superintendent, school board president, school business official, and board secretary. Special guests included the NSBA executive director and IASB past presidents and executive directors.

The opening of the Conference on Friday, Nov. 21, also marked the official roll-out of a new statewide education initiative, “Vision 20/20.”

This year’s conference also was the first time that events and reports were updated live via IASB’s Twitter social media page. Many individuals and organizations participated in this online sharing, retweeting and adding their own messages from the event.

The 83rd Joint Annual Conference will be held Nov. 20-22, 2015. A Call for Proposals is now available.

IASBO’s Schilling, former Glenbrook business manager, wins Everett Award for management

Craig Schilling, associate professor of educational leadership at Concordia University of Chicago, was recognized during the second general session of the Joint Annual Conference as this year’s Ronald E. Everett Distinguished Service Award winner.



Craig Schilling

The award, presented by the Illinois Association of School Business Officials, “honors diligence, superior performance and service to the school business public.” It was originated to recognize the 24 years of service that Everett gave to

Illinois ASBO as executive director.

Schilling formerly served as assistant superintendent for business affairs at **Glenbrook High School District 225**. He was praised for his knowledge of the financial needs of Illinois school districts. He previously served as a business manager in Illinois schools for more than 20 years, including **Marquardt School District 15, Rich Township HSD 227, Matteson, and Glenbrook**.

Schilling commented on his award, “It’s the highest compliment I could receive. Ron Everett’s real legacy is that he elevated the status of the profession and Illinois ASBO in Illinois. I think we both considered service to the profession a ‘calling.’”

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but an award for the entire district, which makes me extremely proud.”

Grant Park is a unit district located approximately sixty miles south of Chicago. The district serves more than 500 students in grades pre-K to 12.

Dickson, an education attorney in Indiana, maintains that all students of Grant Park deserve and require the best leadership and instruction available, thus he promotes educational opportunities and motivates staff to stay compassionate and committed to students.

In his nominating letter, Grant Park Superintendent John Palan cited several examples of Dickson’s compassion, not only for the students of the district, but for the teachers and community. Dickson has been described as demonstrating high levels of integrity and taking courageous stances on multiple occasions.

Palan wrote in his letter: “Mr. Dickson’s efforts, vision, compassion and dedication to Grant Park are compelling reasons for him to receive this award.”

Panel session handout materials offered free on Members-Only website, with ID

Handouts from as many as 80 of the 100-plus panels presented at this year’s Joint Annual Conference are 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 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 www.iasb.com/press/memonly.cfm.

Boards asked to 'share the success' with panel session ideas for 2015 Conference

Now is the time for school districts and other education organizations to propose panel presentations for the 83rd Joint Annual Conference in November 2015.

"Share the Success" panels make up about one third of the 100-plus panels at the conference.

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

Presenters are invited to share insights 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.



Former Gov. Jim Edgar chatted with Illinois Channel representative Terry Martin after sharing ideas at a panel session at this year's Conference

Panel proposals that are received in the IASB Springfield office by Feb. 14, 2015 will be evaluated by a committee of Association members and 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 pan-

See **SHARE THE SUCCESS** on page 8

Conference survey asks attendees about their 2014 experience

Those who attended the 2014 Joint Annual Conference are invited to share their opinions of their conference experience in an online evaluation survey. The brief survey, which asks questions ranging from the ease of the registration process to the quality of programs and exhibits, can be found at <http://www.iasb.com/jac14>.

The survey's purpose is to get a "broad overview" of the perceptions of conference attendees, as well as to provide the association with information that may aid in planning conference panel sessions and other events in the future, according to Dean Langdon, associate executive director.

The survey will be closed on Dec. 31, 2014.

Dec. 22 last day for board member candidates to file

Three deadlines are nearing that will impact the April 2015 Consolidated Primary Elections.

Monday, Dec. 22, is the last day for school board candidates in the April 7, 2015 election to file nominating papers with the county clerk or county board of election commissioners in which the principal office of the school district is located. (10 ILCS 5/10-6).

Friday, Jan. 16, is the last day for the school board to adopt resolutions putting public policy questions (10 ILCS 5/28-2).

Thursday, Jan. 29, 2015, meanwhile, is the last day for the board secretary to certify those public policy questions to the election authority (10 ILCS 5/28-5).

Note: Because of changes in state law, school board candidate nomination papers are no longer filed with

See **DEADLINES** on page 8

Seven of 11 school bond issues win, along with four of 13 school tax increase proposals at polls

Unofficial school referendum results from the Nov. 4 General Election indicate voters approved seven of 11 bond issues and four of 13 property tax increases. That count is based on the Illinois State Board of Elections list of referendums on the consolidated election ballot.

Bond issues were approved in: **Ford Heights SD 169**; **Hoover-Schrum Memorial SD 157**, Calumet City; **Lena-Winslow CUSD 202**; **New Trier High School District 203**, Northfield; **Quincy SD 172**; **Round Lake CUSD 116**; and **Waverly CUSD 6**. All of the propositions called for the issuance of building bonds. Voters said no to bond issues in: **Batavia CUSD 101**; **Champaign CUSD 4**; **CUSD 201**, Westmont; and **Monticello SD 25**.

Property tax increases were approved in **Kansas CUSD 3**; **Meridian CUSD 223**, Stillman Valley; **South**

Wilmington CCSD 74; and **Westchester SD 92½**. Voters rejected school tax hike proposals in **Beardstown CUSD 15**; **Breese Elementary SD 12**; **Crescent-Iroquois CUSD 249**, Crescent City; **Grand Prairie CCSD 6**, Centralia; **Liberty CUSD 2**, **McClellan CCSD 12**, Mt. Vernon; **Monmouth-Roseville CUSD 238**; **Pennoyer SD 79**, Norridge; and **Thomasboro CCSD 130**.

Six of 14 county sales tax increase proposals were approved, bringing the total number in the state to 30. Measures were approved in Calhoun, Greene, Jersey, Morgan, White, and Whiteside counties. But voters said no to such county sales taxes in Carroll, Edwards, Gallatin, Kankakee, Macoupin, Moultrie, Piatt, and Wayne counties.

Three school district consolidation proposals appeared on local ballots and all were approved. One will

See **REFERENDUM** on page 8

VISION 20/20 *from page 1*

“We want to get their [lawmakers’] constituents saying to them, ‘Why aren’t you listening to what educators say about education?’” said IASB Executive Director Roger Eddy. “This is a crossroads. ... We have to, as educators, take back the future of public education,” he said.

Illinois Association of School Administrators Executive Director Brent Clark agreed, directing strong criticism at two state funding concerns for schools: “the current emphasis on what money is available from the state as opposed to what amount is needed for schools; and a budget timeline that forces districts to make budgetary decisions without knowing how much state funding they’ll receive.”



He said the latter concern forces administrators to make blind cuts to positions and programs before they know what their funding will be. “No business with any sense would operate that way,” Clark said.

Executives from all six partner organizations were on hand at conference to show a video that launched the initiative to more than 1,500 school leaders.

For more information about Vision 20/20, including links to the video, an executive summary, policy brief, and other links in their “toolkit,” visit the website at: www.illinoisvision2020.org.

REFERENDUM *from page 7*

combine **Bluford CCSD 114** with **Dodds CCSD 7**, Mt. Vernon, and **Webber THSD 204**, Bluford. Voters from a fourth district, **Farrington CCSD 99**, Bluford, turned down the option to join the other three districts in the merger.

Voters in Jefferson County approved the consolidation of **Woodlawn CHSD 205** and **Woodlawn CCSD 4**, while voters in Vermilion County gave approval for the consolidation of **Catlin CUSD 5** and **Jamaica CUSD 12**.

One of three proposals to elect school board members at large was approved in **Durand CUSD 322**, but

the idea was turned down in **North Mac CUSD 34** and **Belvidere CUSD 100**.

In other balloting, voters in **Brooklyn USD 188**, Lovejoy, rejected a proposal to deactivate the district’s high school in order to send its students to school in **East St. Louis SD 189**. Voters in **Rockford SD 205** approved a miscellaneous referendum on whether the school board should use existing capital project funds for some contemplated new school construction. And **Hinsdale THSD 86** voters said no to an advisory referendum on retirement salary increases.

SHARE THE SUCCESS *from page 7*

el session may be asked to present at the alternative, 30 minute “Carousel of Panels” sessions.

Instructions and an official Request for Proposal submission form is available online at: www.iasb.com/jac15/rfp.cfm. Districts that have questions about the panel proposal process should contact Nesa Brauer at 217/528-9688, ext. 1127.

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the school district but must be filed, instead, with the county clerk or county board of election commissioners of the county in which the principal office of the school district is located.

For more information about election deadlines, download a complete list, including legal citations to pertinent Illinois laws, at: www.iasb.com/pdf/cal_1415.pdf.

New IASB community engagement workshop set for two sites soon

The Illinois Association of School Boards will offer a new workshop on community engagement at two locations in February designed to assist school boards in the purpose and process of community engagement. The workshop will be held Feb. 7 at Northern Illinois University in Naperville, and Feb. 21 at IASB in Springfield.

The workshop was developed as a follow-up to the publication last year of IASB’s study, “*Connecting with the Community: the Purpose and Process of Community Engagement as part of Effective School Board Governance.*” The report and a summary can be found at: <http://www.iasb.com/training/connecting.cfm>.

It was the result of a year-long effort to develop tools and training around school board engagement of the local community. IASB offered a preconference workshop and three panel sessions at the 2014 Joint Annual Conference exploring that topic.

The purpose of the new workshop in February is to help boards and superintendents better understand what community engagement is, why it is critical, what school boards can expect to accomplish through it, and how to evaluate the results.

The aim is to provide a foundation to begin the process of enabling school boards to recapture and maintain the local control that many say is endangered or disappearing from school districts and their communities.

While many districts do fine work around public relations or polling, connecting with the community involves more than that. Research shows it requires an ongoing, two-way conversation that enables the school board to hear and respond to the community’s educational aspirations.

More information about the February workshops is available online at: www.iasb.com/calendar/CWC_winterworkshop15.pdf.

First Alliance Leadership Summit to meet Feb. 17-18 in Springfield

The first-ever Alliance Leadership Summit scheduled for Feb. 17-18 at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield will focus on the future of public education in Illinois, including the new statewide initiative, Vision 20/20.

“The timing of the summit offers a perfect opportunity for superintendents, school board members, principals, school business officials and other stakeholders in public education to come together as a unified team to learn and also to engage legislators,” according to Ben Schwarm, IASB’s deputy executive director.

The summit will feature the following guests and panels:

Joseph Scherer, executive director of the Superintendents’ National Dialogue: A former teacher, adjunct professor, and Associate Executive Director of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), Scherer is a passionate advocate for public education. His presentation is titled “School Leaders: Strong Minds Creating a Vision.”

Vision 20/20 presentation: This presentation will focus on the four pillars the plan — Highly Effective Educators, 21st Century Learning, Shared Accountability, and Equitable and Adequate Funding.

Political Analyst Panel: This panel, which will discuss the implications of Illinois having a new governor and the upcoming spring legislative ses-



sion, includes: Bernie Schoenburg, longtime political columnist for the state capital’s newspaper, *The State Journal-Register*; Jamey Dunn, executive editor of *Illinois Issues* magazine; and Dave McKinney, who spent 19 years covering politics and state government as the statehouse bureau chief of the *Chicago Sun-Times*.

Hot Topics: The executive directors of the Alliance — Brent Clark (IASA), Roger Eddy (IASB), Michael Jacoby (Illinois ASBO), and Jason Leahy (IPA) — will participate in a panel discussion regarding items such as Senate Bill 16, the education budget, pension reform and the cost shift.

Legislative Meetings and Reception: Time will also set aside for legislative visits to the Capitol and the Alliance will host a legislative reception.

The Summit registration fee of \$150, which includes materials, breakfast on Wednesday, two lunches and a reception. Dinner is on participants’ own both days.

More information about the event is available on the IASA website at www.cvent.com/events/alliance-leadership-summit/event-summary-6c02f6f53de74d86ae4d5b8e87d49ee.aspx. Registration is being conducted through each local school district superintendent at IASA.

Winter governing meetings to be held in two IASB divisions in new year

Two IASB divisions are preparing for winter governing meetings, where board members can help division officers and IASB field services staff determine programming needs for the fall and spring division meetings, and get updates on other Association events. Four divisions have already held such meetings for this year.

Each such meeting features a direc-

tor’s report, resolution chair report, and discussion of topics, dates and locations of future division dinner meetings.

Registration is now available for the Jan. 6 Shawnee and Feb. 7 South Cook meetings on the IASB website by clicking on the “Register Online” link for the chosen division meeting at www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm.

NEWS FROM IASB

Annual Report posted

Each year, the Illinois Association of School Boards publishes an Annual Report that reviews activities of the previous fiscal year. The document shows the level of member participation in IASB, the cost of doing business and the year-end balance sheet.

The latest Annual Report, with data on the total of member activities and services, is now online on the Members Only website at <https://members.iasb.com/governance/annual-report-2014.pdf>.

Membership records

Has your local school board experienced board turnover, or has a school board member changed his or her address? IASB is appealing to member school districts to update Association membership records in order to ensure that new members or addresses will be added to the database.

To update the records for your school district, send current information to the Records Manager at IASB.

For additional information, phone IASB’s Janice Kidd at ext. 1142, or email her at jkidd@iasb.com.

BoardBook webinars set

An online learning session, or webinar, is to be offered on Jan. 21 and Feb. 12 regarding BoardBook, the association’s online board agenda building service available to IASB member districts.

This introductory webinar about the BoardBook service is designed for school board members and developed by IASB. It is newly available for viewing by following the link for either date’s event on the IASB calendar website at: www.iasb.com/calendar/calendar.cfm.

NEWS HEADLINES

Catlin (Nov. 28, *Champaign News-Gazette*) The newly formed Catlin-Jamaica school board has officers, two upcoming meetings on the calendar and a couple of early business items to settle. The consolidated Catlin-Jamaica school board recently held its first meeting, and accomplished some initial organizational goals: Jeff Fauver was elected board president, Jeff Carder vice president and Andrea Van Leer secretary. The new board will choose a name and number for the district. Fauver said board members are leaning toward naming the district “Salt Fork” and choosing district number 512. (The former Catlin school system was district 5, and Jamaica was district 12).

Chicago (Dec. 4, *Chicago Sun-Times*) Chicago District 299 has taken a step away from the narrow measure of test scores for judging schools by releasing school ratings based on a richer set of measures. New elementary school ratings are to be based 60 to 65 percent on test scores and, more important, test score growth over time. Two other significant measures for evaluating a school’s effectiveness — attendance rates and the results of a school climate survey — make up most of the rest of the rating. Under the old approach, school ratings were based 86 percent on test scores and test score growth.

Decatur (Dec. 3, *Decatur Herald and Review*) Kristi Palmer, a sociology professor at Richland Community College and two members of the college’s sociology club visited classes at Oak Grove School recently as a part of the group’s efforts to reach out to area schools and host anti-bullying workshops. The children learned about different kinds of bullying, including physical, emotional and cyber situations. They also went through steps on what to do as a victim of bullying or as an observer. The presenters interact with each class-

room for about an hour and aim to provide the children with the basic concepts of bullying, Palmer said.

Madison County (Dec. 7, *Belleville News-Democrat*) Residents of East Alton, Hartford and Wood River are renewing a push to consolidate three school districts into one. If the “committee of ten” is successful with this attempt to consolidate the two elementary districts that feed East Alton-Wood River High School, it will mean the elimination of the last so-called “dual district” in Madison County. While St. Clair County has dozens of smaller elementary districts that feed into separate high school districts, East Alton District 13 and Wood River-Hartford District 15 are the last in Madison County that have not been consolidated into unit districts. In 2011, an initiative appeared on the ballot to consolidate both elementary districts with the high school. It failed by a narrow margin, and after the requisite waiting period, a “committee of ten” has begun to try again.

Skokie (Oct. 22, 2014, *Chicago Sun-Times*) The Skokie/Morton Grove School District 69 Board of Education recently said it will do a better job of communicating with parents and responding to their concerns. In a statement read at the beginning of the Oct. 21 meeting, Board President Terry Lefter read a statement acknowledging the concerns about district staffing levels, overcrowding, the way the district spends its money, and the way different parts of the district communicate with the community. Later, the board discussed the district’s communication policy and suggested that it may consider making changes. In the run-up to the meeting, several district parents wrote to the board with concerns. In her statement, Lefter acknowledged those concerns and said “the board has also recognized the need for our community to come

together to build our vision and, most importantly, rank our priorities as a district for a future together.”

Springfield (Nov. 28, *State Journal-Register*) One elementary school program is improving attendance by creating a dialogue with parents to help gain insight into how to help students perform their best, part of the school’s “Help us, Help You” program. Students with attendance issues can get help from the program. Principal James Hayes said the idea is to work with parents to come up with practical solutions rather than just drilling home the message that their child needs to be at school. One of the main issues, staff discovered, was transportation. Hayes said staff pointed out to parents that the school has federal Title 1 dollars it can use to pay for taxis, bus tokens or even to have the district’s parent educator pick the child up and bring him or her home. In addition, Hayes said, the school identified other students’ parents they could partner with to get their child to school each day.

Statewide (Dec. 9, *The Daily Herald*) A state contract with the private vendor that ran the Illinois Lottery, which helps fund Illinois schools, has been formally terminated. Illinois Lottery Director Michael Jones made the contract termination announcement on Dec. 9. Northstar Lottery Group will get reimbursed for up to \$12.65 million for costs related to closing down. Subcontractors Gtech and Scientific Games will continue to provide services to the Lottery at a lower rate. In August, Gov. Pat Quinn directed the Lottery to end its relationship with Northstar Lottery Group after three years of a 10-year contract because of performance concerns. Quinn’s office, Lottery officials and Northstar reportedly negotiated the termination details to avoid lawsuits.

Expedited appeal OK'd in pension law overhaul case

The Illinois Supreme Court has granted a request from the state government to quickly review a state pension overhaul law that a lower court declared unconstitutional.

On Dec. 9, the Illinois Supreme Court issued an order that would allow for an expedited appeal. The state's pension overhaul law was created in order to close an approximate \$100 billion shortfall in the state's pension system. The law called for reduced cost-of-living adjustments and it required government workers to stay on longer before retirement in exchange for paying less money toward pensions.

In November, Attorney General Lisa Madigan requested that the Illinois Supreme Court make a decision on the case quickly after a Springfield-based judge ruled the law unconstitutional on Nov. 21. The November ruling found that the law violated a provision of the Illinois Constitution that prohibits reducing public employee retirement benefits once they're promised.

The pension reform that state leaders enacted into law in December 2013 was intended to gradually make up for years of government underfunding that landed Illinois' retirements accounts roughly \$100 billion short of what they need to cover benefits promised to employees.

Sangamon County Circuit Judge John Belz apparently was not swayed by the Illinois Attorney General's arguments that the pension reform was lawful because in times of crisis, the

state's sovereignty — essentially, its “police powers” — allow it to impose extraordinary measures.

“The state of Illinois made a constitutionally protected promise to its employees concerning their pension benefits,” Belz wrote in a six-page opinion. “Under established and uncontroverted Illinois law, the state of Illinois cannot break its promise.”

Attorney General Lisa Madigan sought the expedited ruling by the Supreme Court because of the financial implications facing Illinois in the coming year. Madigan has said that without a quick response, the government would have to find a way to make up approximately \$1 billion in savings in the first year.

After the state files its argument on Jan. 12, the retired teachers, university employees and state workers must respond by Feb. 27. Once both filings have occurred, the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments from both sides in March.

Even with the sped-up schedule it is unknown whether the Supreme Court might be able to issue a decision prior to the May 31 scheduled legislative adjournment, which is the date by which a budget is normally approved by the General Assembly. If the Supreme Court were to overturn the lower court's ruling and deem the pension changes constitutional, the state could save approximately \$1 billion in Fiscal Year 2016, according to Madigan.

Even though the Court granted the state's request for an “accelerat-

ed docket,” it is unknown whether the Court would finalize the case in time for the decision to be figured into next year's budget proceedings. But a similar lawsuit involving increased costs for state retiree healthcare premiums was heard by the high Court in Sep. 2013, with the final ruling issued nearly a year later in July 2014.

The Illinois Federation of Teachers (IFT) is skeptical of the claims of urgency in the case. A recent IFT blog said, in fact, that the state's argument is based on trying to create “a false sense of urgency.”

Both the healthcare case and the pension case challenge the constitutionality of reducing employee benefits protected by the Illinois Constitution. If the Supreme Court follows much the same precedent used in declaring the healthcare changes unconstitutional, the pension reforms might also be ruled unlawful. If this is the eventual outcome, elected state officials have said they hope the Supreme Court ruling will provide guidance on possible lawful alternatives to control pension costs, according to a Nov. 21 *Chicago Tribune* article titled “Illinois politicians seeking court guidance on pensions may be let down.”

The *Tribune* article said: “...the incoming Republican governor and others wanting an even tougher alternative to the law approved last December continued to look optimistically to the state's seven justices in hopes they'll say how pensions can be legally changed.”

Advisory ballot question on proposed higher tax for millionaires approved

In addition to the usual tax and bond propositions on the ballot in local school districts for the upcoming Nov. 4 General Election, a school-related advisory referendum for a “millionaire tax” was on the ballot and was approved statewide.

On that question, more than two million Illinois voters agreed that a three percent surcharge should be

applied to yearly income above one million dollars and that the additional funds raised should be put toward education. The advisory referendum on the 2014 General Election ballot asked, “Should the Illinois Constitution be amended to require that each school district receive additional revenue, based on their number of students, from an additional three per-

cent tax on income greater than one millions dollars?”

As one of three non-binding ballot initiatives this year, the proposal garnered the support of nearly 64 percent of those who answered the question. Because the referendum question was strictly advisory, and the state constitution requires a flat tax anyway, it will not change Illinois law.

Summary of new laws and changes to impact schools to be mailed in January

JASB 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 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.

HOLLY JACK AWARD *from page 5*

Always passionate about new and better professional development opportunities, Mary Lou Sender has a special connection to IASB and the award namesake. A friend of Holly Jack, Sender years ago voiced her concern about the lack of profession development available for board secretaries and public school administrative assistants. She encouraged IASB to recognize the need for quality training opportunities and became one of the founding members of the secretary's program that

is now featured annually on Friday and Saturday of the Joint Annual Conference.

"I was so humbled to be in the same category as Holly Jack," Sender said.

Wheaton Warrenville is a unit school district, located in the DuPage Division, serving almost 14,000 students in 20 schools.

The award presentation was made during the secretaries' program on Friday and again at the Third General Session on Sunday, Nov. 23.

DELEGATE *from page 4*

- See an additional exception in the Open Meetings Act to allow discussion in executive session of building safety and security issues
- Support legislation that increases the amount of time to fill a school board vacancy from 45 to 60 days

Delegates also rejected four resolutions including: supporting a school district's right to permit concealed carry of firearms in schools, a tax holiday for purchases of healthy foods for use at school functions, laws that would

prohibit parents of truant students from withdrawing in order to attend home schooling, and laws that would prohibit school board members from holding another elected or appointed office with taxing authority.

A list of the resolutions adopted at this year's delegate assembly can be found here: www.iasb.com/jac14/resolutions.cfm. The Association's current position statements can be found at iasb.com/govrel/positions.cfm.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

January 6 – Shawnee Division Winter Governing Meeting, Marion

January 21 – BoardBook webinar, online

January 22 – IASB/IASA Professional Advancement Seminar, Springfield

February 7 – South Cook Winter Meeting, Tinley Park

February 7 – Connecting With the Community Workshop, Naperville

February 12 – BoardBook webinar, online

February 17-18 – Alliance Leadership Summit, Springfield

February 7 – Connecting With the Community Workshop, Springfield

February 24 – Abe Lincoln Division Spring Dinner Meeting

February 25 – Southwestern Division Spring Dinner Meeting

February 25 – Wabash Valley Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Albion

February 26 – Illini Division Spring Dinner Meeting, Champaign

NAVIGATE *from page 3*

work with," he said.

The ability of modern security technologies to use local networks and web-based solutions to connect people and information in real-time is quickly becoming a cornerstone of an evolving security infrastructure.

No one can promise this technology provides total security. But, according to Fierman, no technology will do that, and you don't really want to build a fortress around the school. "What you have to do is strike a balance," he says, "but this system adds a new, invaluable layer of security, and every layer adds to peace of mind."

For more information on NavigiGate Prepared™ and Illinois school districts, visit: www.iasb.com/sponsored/navigate.cfm.