

Leadership Matters

iASA
ILLINOIS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
OCTOBER 2015



In this month's issue



Wrap up of the 2015 IASA Annual Conference P. 6



Ask the State Superintendent: What about PARCC P. 19



At your Service: Students, volunteers help get school day started right in Smithton P. 22



Student proficiency vs. student growth P. 30

Conference photos by Lindsey Ward with Lifetouch Photography

Click [here](#) to view a slideshow of conference photos.

Additional Items

- ◆ Students learning in motion at Windsor Elementary P. 26
- ◆ Getting to know your IASA/ISBE Advisory Committee members P. 33
- ◆ Successes in Illinois School Districts P. 34
- ◆ IASA News in Brief P. 35
- ◆ IASA Calendar of Events P. 36



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Volume 3, Issue 9



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State of IASA: Anything but routine and nothing short of phenomenal

Sometimes you can be so focused on the daily battles that you lose sight of the things that are being accomplished step by step, day by day. I discovered that was the case recently when I paused to think about the State of the Association remarks that I was preparing to deliver at the IASA Annual Meeting.

As I told the attendees at the IASA's 51st Annual Conference, the past 12 months have been anything but routine and nothing short of phenomenal. I was talking about things like:

- ◆ We celebrated our 50th anniversary as a stand-alone statewide association in October of 2014. In going back over our history, we were the ultimate start-up business with little more than a filing cabinet and some really dedicated educators.
- ◆ In November of 2014, a Sangamon County Circuit Court judge ruled that Senate Bill 1, the pension reform legislation that would have slashed pension benefits for TRS members and other public employees, was unconstitutional. In anticipation of the pension theft bill, we had retained Judge Gino DiVito in May of 2011. He

led the oral arguments in front of the Illinois Supreme Court last March and the high court issued a strong and unanimous ruling in our favor last May.

- ◆ At our conference, we honored five quiet school superintendents who stepped forward to become the plaintiffs in the landmark case that protected the pension benefits for hundreds of thousands of teachers, administrators and other public employees and retirees. The IASA Exemplary Service to Education Award went to Lance Landeck (Oakland CUSD 5), Kenneth Lee (Iroquois County CUSD 9), Dr. John Sawyer III (retired superintendent), Mike Schiffman (Freeport District 145) and Kyle Thompson (Assistant Regional Superintendent of Schools for ROE 11 in Charleston).
- ◆ We unveiled the Vision 20/20 initiative at the Joint Annual Conference in November of 2014, culminating almost three years of work by educators from all over the state with a blueprint for the future of public education in Illinois.

(Continued on page 4)

- ◆ The next step was transforming the vision into action. Two Vision 20/20 bills – one streamlining licensure and establishing reciprocity with other states and the other establishing the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure – were signed into law this summer. Some school districts already are benefitting from the reciprocity law to find high quality candidates for hard-to-fill positions. The Balanced Accountability Measure will be implemented over the next few years and I think it will be a game-changer regarding how people view our school districts, reporting on the overall professional practices of a district instead of focusing solely on a standardized test score.
- ◆ Then in August we launched the iTunes Learning Center, a repository of information and resources developed by the best and brightest educators in the state on various courses that is available free of charge to any teacher, student or parent in the state. It is one form of equity in educational opportunity, and it is just the beginning as more courses will be added.
- ◆ Dr. Tom Bertrand of Rochester was selected Illinois Superintendent of the Year for 2015. Tom is a unique leader not only for his district, but he has been a strong voice for IASA and for public education.
- ◆ We also implemented the Superintendents of Distinction award for our 21 regions so we could recognize the great work that is going on in every part of the state. Tom and the region winners attended a luncheon at the Executive Mansion in Springfield in April and Governor Bruce Rauner showed up to honor the group.
- ◆ Last February we joined with our partners in the Statewide School Management Alliance and held the Alliance Leadership Summit. The event, which we plan to hold every other year, included some great presentations such as the one by Ralph Martire, and a roundtable discussion by journalists that cover state government. Importantly, it also included visits to legislators in the capitol. That sort of personal, face-to-face involvement is the strongest form of advocacy.

So what's next? As many of our passionate speakers highlighted during the conference, we need to continue to focus on kids and relationships. We need to take advantage of the fact that we in public education at least have a signed budget. We need to have a great school year despite the political dysfunction around us. We need to be a beacon of hope in a state that seems adrift.

The challenges we have faced have been difficult, but we have a great network to battle those challenges. I urge you to collaborate. Together, we can be a strong voice for the more than 2 million schoolchildren whose futures depend on us. Public education may be the hottest topic for the General Assembly next spring, so forming a united front may be more important than ever.

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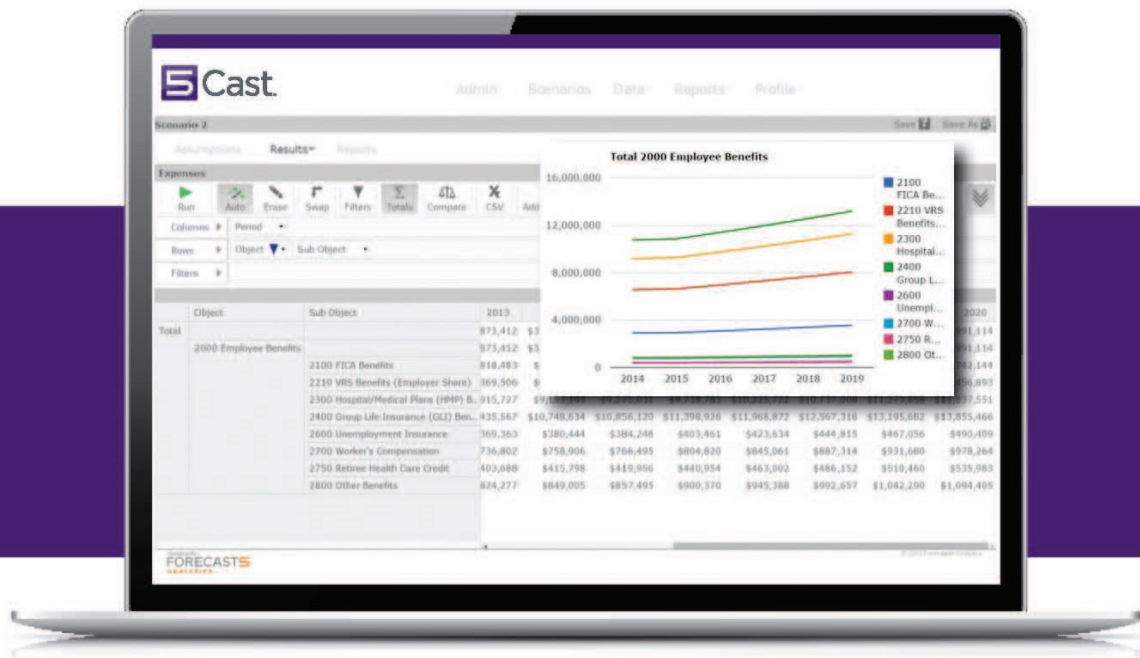
I am privileged to serve you and represent you as the executive director of IASA. Being a school superintendent or administrator is servant leadership, and the phrase "leadership matters" has never been more true or important than it is today.

Brent Clark



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Diverse backgrounds, but common theme: Every child has potential, hidden treasures

By Mike Chamness
IASA Communications Director

People from vastly different backgrounds sharing the same passionate view about public education: Every child has potential, and it is up to educators at all levels to unlock those sometimes well-hidden treasures.

I was struck by the fact that despite their ethnic and geographic diversity, three of the keynote speakers at the recently concluded IASA Annual Conference could not have been more synchronized in delivering the message that *all* children matter. And in each case, they were speaking from personal experience, including:

A woman who grew up in a barrio in Laredo, Texas, and went on to hold the highest combat support field rank of any Hispanic woman in the U.S. Army and now dedicates her life to fighting poverty and discrimination for children;

An African-American man who overcame a childhood of neglect and abuse in Dayton, Ohio, and despite what he admits were long odds went on to attain college degrees and become a successful businessman and author; and

A Caucasian man who bounced to 12 different schools before reaching high school and at one point in his childhood was homeless in northern California. He now serves as the state superintendent of schools in the fifth-largest state in the nation.

The common thread was that in each case educators stepped in and invested their time and energy to tap into potential that even the children themselves did not realize was there.

Consuelo Castillo Kickbusch remembered a childhood of poverty, language barriers and discrimination. She also recalled a knock on her door that changed the course of her life.

"Mr. Cooper carried the title of teacher, but he was an extraordinary educational leader. He actually came into our barrio...and we unfairly had judged him as just another 'white dude' or 'gringo.' He saw beyond the walls that existed in our community and he saw something in me, beyond the fight that was inside me," she remembered. "He knocked on our door and in broken Spanish introduced himself. He asked if he could help me. Up to that point, we always heard we were bad kids and problems.

"His words were profound. He said 'We have failed you and I will not be part of that.' He helped to fill the gaps. Now we have wonderful English Language Learner programs. I still believe that public education is the most concrete form of democracy."

For Mark Anthony Garrett, it was a third-grade teacher who literally saved his life. A special needs child who suffered from neglect, abandonment, homelessness, and physical and sexual abuse, Garrett was a foster child whose adoptive mother died of cancer when he was 14 years old. He dropped out of school, joined a gang, got involved



with drugs and ended up in and out of juvenile jail.

At age 18, when Garrett put a gun to his head and contemplated suicide, it was the voice of that third-grade teacher that caused him to lower the gun.

"I could hear Miss (Betty Jean) Ritchie telling me 'Mark, you are significant, you are important. One day you are going to grow up and do great things.' In that moment, she was my hero. She opened up my mind to new possibilities."

The title of Garrett's book is fittingly enough "Teachers Are Heroes – A New Paradigm for Service Excellence."

"If you think what you do doesn't matter, it does," Garrett told attendees at the conference. "I am here today because a teacher said I was important. Without Miss Ritchie, I would have been in jail or probably dead...if we do it the right way, we can save thousands of kids. Miss Ritchie did not see me for what I was - a broken child - she saw me for what I could be. She saw in me what I could not see in myself."

Garrett said the actions of teachers and administrators - even small things like a smile or a handshake - can have a ripple and multiplying effect on others.

"We can change people's destinies. I am proof

of that," Garrett said, urging educators to bring great enthusiasm to their jobs every day. "Every child, every chance, every day. I don't remember any test I ever took, but I do remember relationships. You cannot teach those that you can't reach or grow them if you don't know them."

Illinois State Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith told attendees that providing educational opportunities for all children is a mission that "is deeply personal."

"I've only been in public schools - more than 12 of them before high school as I was bounced around a lot," Smith said. "I found there is an extraordinary difference in feeling if I was welcome or not, and whether I belonged or not. It had a deep impact on me."

After spending much of his first four months as the Illinois State Superintendent traveling the state, Smith said about students he met and observed "I believe deeply in my heart that the talent of our children is abundant throughout the state, but the opportunities are not."

Calling it an aspirational narrative, Smith said "I choose to dwell on possibility" and talked about a unified system across the state focused on changing the outcomes for all kids.

"In Illinois, we could, in fact, educate every child - something that has not been done in the United States."

Conference Candids



The mood being set by a wonderful musical group from Des Plaines CCSD 62, the IASA 51st Annual Conference got off to a rousing start last week. The musical group The D62s consisting of teachers, a principal and a retired teacher from the school district of IASA President Dr. Jane L. Westerhold played and sang a variety of songs from the 80s and 90s and had the crowd on its feet.

The conference, which was held in downtown Springfield at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel and at the Prairie Capital Convention center, attracted more than 600 attendees from more than 450 school districts in Illinois.

In her opening remarks, Dr. Westerhold told superintendents and other administrators "We are a family...don't be afraid to ask for support." The D62s punctuated her point by singing Sister Sledge's "We Are Family".

The Opening Ceremonies included the Pledge of Allegiance led by Amy Lewis, the Illinois Education Association 2015 Teacher of the Year (and a member of The D62s). The National Anthem was performed by The D62s' lead singers Diane Robinson and Mary Prost.



Dr. Karen Beerer



The keynote speaker for the first general session was Dr. Karen Beerer, Discovery Education's vice president of professional development. Her topic was "Leading the Learning in a Digital Age: Why Now?"

Using a school classroom photo from the early 1900s to emphasize the point, she noted "This is not our classroom of today, this is not our teacher of today...and these are not our kids from today. Students today come to us with different skills."

She noted a survey showing that employers rated digital literacy as 91 out of 100 in importance - higher even than education. She used the acronym LEAD as the centerpiece of her presentation:

- ◆ L - Let change begin with you, and model that change.
- ◆ E - Ensure instruction comes first by leading with pedagogy, not technology - and provide professional development for teachers.
- ◆ A - Assessments are critical, but are yours purposeful? She noted how virtual reality is being used in some places to help close the education gaps.
- ◆ D - Demand a culture of "yes" - not only yes they can, but yes they will.



Consuelo Kickbusch



Saying that "public education is the most concrete form of democracy," Consuelo Castillo Kickbusch delivered a passionate message about valuing diversity to an inspired audience of superintendents and other educators.

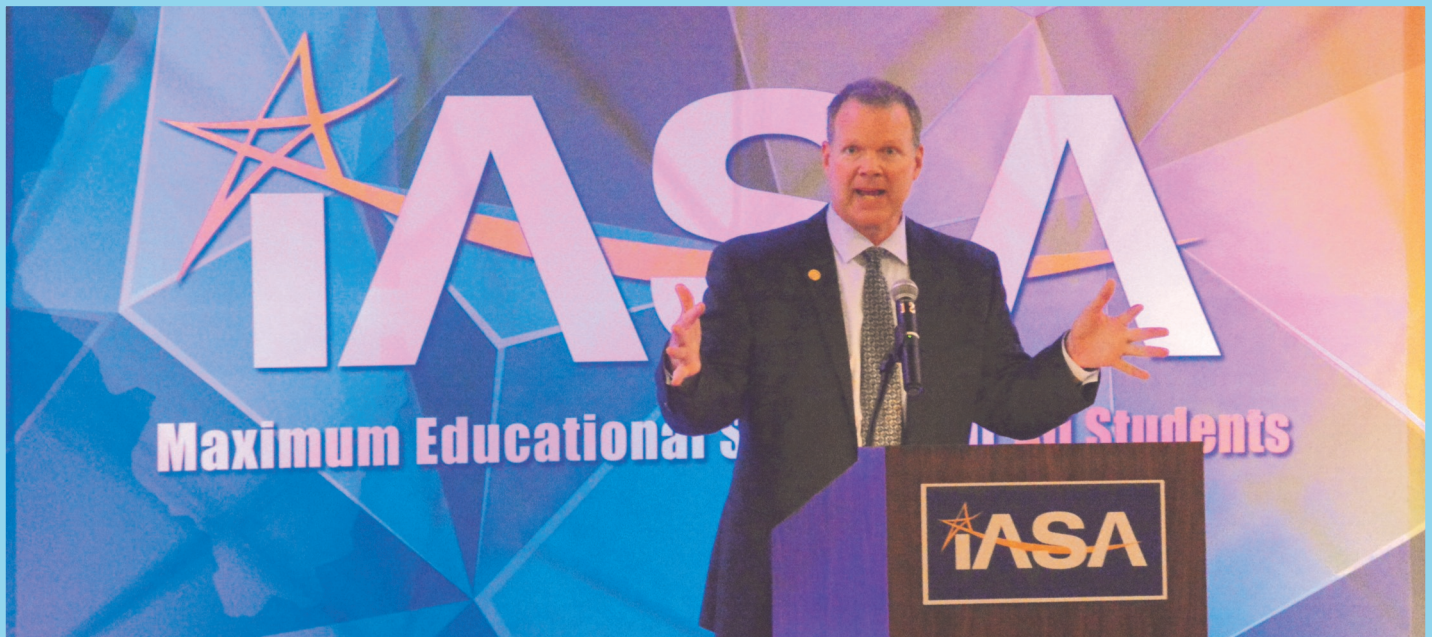
Kickbusch talked about her humble beginnings as a child in a small barrio in Laredo, Texas, and how a teacher named Mr. Cooper made a home visit to reach out and help resurrect her education and her life. She went on to become at that time as a Lieutenant Colonel the highest-ranking Hispanic woman in the Combat Support Field of the U.S. Army.

She called her parents her first teachers, adding "they had a Ph. D. in life" and taught her the values that still provide a moral compass and guide her today.

"Many kids come to school looking for a safe place," she said, citing her own childhood as an English Language Learner (ELL) whose family battled poverty. "ELL kids live in the shadows...there is a different mindset about their potential. We shouldn't look at a child as poor, of a certain color or by what zip code they live in. Leaders live a legacy and create a culture of learning. It takes courage. If teachers don't understand cultural literacy, it causes frustration.



"If we look at kids differently, they will feel different. America is better than that. We have a moral imperative to look beyond standards and data points. It's on your nickel, on your watch and under your leadership. You are leaders and guardians. You have two opportunities. You can be dream makers or gatekeepers."



Mentioning his childhood, State Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith termed his mission of helping lead the efforts to provide educational opportunities for Illinois children "deeply personal."

After spending much of his first four months as the Illinois State Superintendent traveling the state, Smith said about students he met and observed "I believe deeply in my heart that the talent of our children is abundant throughout the state, but the opportunities are not."

The main theme of Smith's presentation was his personal mantra "I choose to dwell on possibility." Calling it an aspirational narrative, Smith talked about a unified system across the state focused on changing the outcomes for all kids.

Among other points Smith made in an hour-long discussion with attendees, were:

- ◆ "Do we appreciate children as problems to be solved or unique gifts we've never seen before?"
 - ◆ "I believe in core ideas, but I am very flexible in the 'how' "
 - ◆ "The future of Illinois depends on the strength of public schools."
 - ◆ ISBE "should not be an agency of 'no.' I would love nothing more than our agency to be one that takes care of you."
 - ◆ "My commitment to you is that I will dwell on the possibility that we can be the greatest educational state in the country. In the time I have left in this job, I promise to help you be great."





Mark Anthony Garrett left Illinois school superintendents and administrators inspired and on their feet as he closed the IASA 51st Annual Conference with a spellbinding presentation around the theme that educators can be "lifesavers."

He shared his own personal story about a teacher who reached out to Garrett and other children who had been labeled as "special needs" kids back in 1977 when he was in third grade. He said it was that teacher's voice in his head years later that caused him to put down a gun and abort his suicide attempt. Despite coming from a childhood that included neglect, abuse and gang involvement in Dayton, Ohio, Garrett went on to obtain college degrees and now travels the country motivating students and educators about their potential.

Garrett said the actions of teachers and administrators - even small things like a smile or a handshake - can have a ripple and multiplying effect on others.

"We can change people's destinies. I am proof of that," Garrett said, urging educators to bring great enthusiasm to their jobs every day. "Every child, every chance, every day. I don't remember any test I ever took, but I do remember relationships.

"You cannot teach those that you can't reach or grow them if you don't know them."





Conference Candids-Day 1



IASA Exemplary Service to Education Award recipients

The IASA Exemplary Service to Education Award went to Lance Landeck (Oakland CUSD 5), Kenneth Lee (Iroquois County CUSD 9), Dr. John Sawyer III (retired superintendent), Mike Schiffman (Freeport District 145) and Kyle Thompson (Assistant Regional Superintendent of Schools for ROE 11 in Charleston).



Conference Candids-Day 2



The day began before daybreak with the IASA's Third Annual "Super" 5K Fun Run/Walk. Thirty-six runners and walkers participated. While it was not a competitive race as such, the top two male finishers were Brad Voehringer, superintendent at Pennoyer 79, in a time of 20:32 and Joshua Stafford, superintendent at Vienna 13-3, in a time of 22:00. The top two females were Barbara Toney of the Illinois Association of Schools Boards (IASB) in a time of 33:20, and Carrie Matlock of DLA Architects in a time of 34:42.



Conference Candids-Day 3



IASA Executive Director Dr. Brent Clark (top right) delivered the IASA State of the Association address as part of the IASA Annual Meeting held in conjunction with the conference.

He highlighted key events and accomplishments from the past year. He also predicted that public education might be the focus of the spring 2016 session of the General Assembly, with such issues as a property tax freeze and/or a cost shift and perhaps even another attempt at pension reform among the potential topics.

Of course, the budget remains the top legislative priority and we are hopeful of continuing the momentum behind turning the Vision 20/20 proposals into law. Two of those items – reciprocity and the Illinois Balanced Accountability Measure – were signed into law this past summer.

IASA Board Member Dr. Dan Oest (top left), superintendent of Richmond-Burton District 157, offered a proposed change to the IASA bylaws to change the association's dues structure. The motion was approved by voice vote of the membership. Also, IASA Treasurer Dr. Sheila-Harrison Williams (bottom left), superintendent of Hazel Crest District 152 ½, presented the Treasurer's Report, which also was approved.

IASA Past President Scott Kuffel (bottom right) was recognized for his service to the association during the course of the past year. The Geneseo superintendent talked about the different lenses that people use when it comes to public education.

"There is the lens of scarcity and the lens of abundance," Kuffel said. "Many of us are cynical about the scarcity we face. But never lose sight of the talents, treasures, hearts and humility that is abundant in this room."



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- ◆ Illinois Coordinating Council for Career & Technical Student Organizations
- ◆ Illinois Energy Consortium (IEC)
- ◆ Illinois High School Association (IHSA)
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- ◆ Standard for Success
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- ◆ TalentEd by PeopleAdmin
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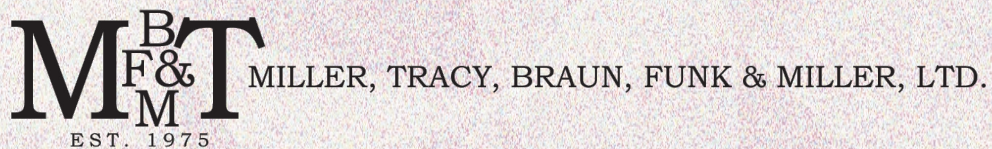
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Ask the State Superintendent: What about PARCC?

Q: What was the purpose for getting out in front of the release of the state's PARCC scores and the **letter** you sent to school superintendents throughout the state?

A: Twofold. I realize the timeline on getting the final PARCC results is lengthy. As I traveled around the state, I was hearing the demand that school superintendents wanted to see it. I felt compelled to get it out and say what's here and what's not here so we can start learning. I thought if the state agency can absorb some of that initial reaction and help frame the conversation about PARCC maybe that can be helpful.

The second part is that I didn't want to say kind of paternalistically, "Let me handle it." I wanted to say "Hey guys, here's what I am up to. Here's what I am thinking. Here's how I'm going about this and let's do this together over the next couple of months."

It felt really important to me to get those results out there and take responsibility, but also to do it together with the superintendents from around the state, and I tried to convey that in the letter.

Q: One line in your letter really caught my attention, and that was where you said that these results should not be used to shame teachers or students or school districts. What did you mean by that?

A: I think unfortunately we've gotten to a place where there's this notion that accountability is about punishment. To me, the information we get from the PARCC results should be used to determine how we provide more support to students and teachers. It should be about what are we doing well, and what do we need to work on if we're not where we want to be.

I don't think punishment and shaming is a good strategy for getting better outcomes. I wanted to be really honest and direct with people and tell them do not use this information in that way. Not even if you're compelled to say we're better than someplace else. We need to steer clear of those types of comparisons.

Q: Why do you think the PARCC scores are what most observers would categorize as being low?

A: Honestly, this is a new baseline. There is nothing to compare this to because this is the first administration of a test like this. We are asking kids new and more expansive questions. That's exciting to



State Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith. If you have questions you would like to submit, please forward them to mchamness@iasaedu.org.

me because these assessments are really orienting toward what's coming next. Are you ready for the future? I love that about these assessments.

A 3 doesn't mean you fail, it means you are approaching the next level but may not be quite at the level of a 4. At level 4 you've mastered the content at the grade level you are in and you're ready to enter into a credit-bearing course and pass. A 3 may mean that you have a beginning awareness of what's coming and be able to participate in that. With support you are ready for what's coming next.

Q: So what do you have to say to someone who takes the first-year PARCC results and tries to compare them to last year's scores?

A: They are not comparable. It's important to remember that with PARCC, kids were asked to demonstrate knowledge and responses to new kinds of questions. It is a baseline to be compared against itself over time. A comparison to a prior and different type of test doesn't give you what you might think it does.

Q: You were not here for the Year One implementation of PARCC, but are there any lessons learned as you study how it was implemented?

A: I think the biggest takeaway for me was communication. I can't count the number of times I've had this conversation – and still have them – about "Why are we doing this?" As educators, the "why" question is so important. I feel like I've had a good

opportunity to say here's what I understand and why I think this is valuable. The information from PARCC should be formative and that we have the ability to get this information and then use it in the right way.

The other thing I like is that in the field it was diagnostic. Many school districts had the ability to administer the test online while others had to use pencil and paper. Even in places where it was assumed that they had good technological infrastructure, when all of their kids were online trying to answer something at the same time, their stuff crashed. So to really say that we're wired for 21st century learning and ready for what's coming, it was a good wakeup call. The technological divide we have in this state among school districts is not fair, it's not equitable and it's a big issue. We've got to pay attention to that.

Overall, I think for the administration of a first-time assessment, it went very well. A very high number of kids and families took it and I think they will benefit from the information that we have been able to gather. And, as I said, the systems got feedback on their ability to deliver it online.

Q: Final question: Where do you stand on PARCC?

A: Having something that is a common, high-quality assessment to help this country say our kids are ready for what's coming is important. To explicitly name the deep divides in performance by race and class is also important because we've got to resolve some of the extraordinarily deep divides in this

country. I think PARCC and Smarter Balance have advanced that conversation.

But, in the end, the one thing I am most committed to is a high-quality, comparable assessment. That's what this country needs to make sure we're not wasting extraordinary human potential, and that we're giving kids what they need.

I do think that the Illinois Learning Standards and the Social Emotional Learning Standards are good, and that the way Illinois has gone about its work the last 10 years is pretty wonderful. There is some really good work going on across the state—from building a good learning environment to the amazing work that teachers and students are doing.

However, we've also got places where we've got overcrowding, no place for the books and people are struggling. The equity and opportunity gap is real. I believe the work of improving the content standards in Illinois is a critical investment in every kid.

Our goal as a state agency is to do a better job of supporting districts and make it as easy as possible for administrators, principals and teachers to serve their kids. When people call here, they're not calling to chat. They're calling because they need help. The compliance and accountability stuff should not be our first response to a question. It should be "What's the issue? How can we help?" The role of a good state agency can and should be to help systems run better. That's how I'm doing this, and that's why I'm here. I know some people's attitudes are "The proof is in the pudding," and I think that's fair.



Super Region Meeting

Save the Date - Super Region Meeting with State Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith

IASA and new ISBE state superintendent Dr. Tony Smith will host one final super-region meeting to formally introduce Dr. Smith to our membership. The meeting will be held from 10 - 11:30 a.m.

October 27 in Normal

(To register, contact Deana at IASA at 217.753.2213 or dcrenshaw@iasaedu.org)

2015-2016 Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings Tool software available for purchase



Illinois School

Districts continue to comply with requirements of education reforms. As such, the Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) has worked to provide support via the Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File.

Since the creation of the software, more than 400 school districts have used the software to help with making important staffing decisions. This program gives districts a method of managing district positions aligned to local qualifications, teachers' credentials and performance ratings. The program compiles this local data and creates reports needed to comply with Senate Bill 7.

The annual licensing fee of \$275 for members and \$550 for non-members remains the same this year.

If you would like to purchase the IASA SB 7 Performance Rating file, please click [here](#).

Please note that previous versions of the IASA Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File are no longer supported. Also, the service method for the 2015-2016 software will be via email only at sb7@iasasureys.org.



At your Service: Students, volunteers help get school day started right in Smithton



**By Dr. Susan Homes,
Superintendent
Smithton CCSD 130**

At Smithton School, service learning is an integral part of the K-8 student educational experience. Students are provided the opportunity to help their peers, the local community and the world community. Such projects help ensure the school meets the requirements of the Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards, but, more importantly, students have the opportunity to develop the

character traits needed for success in school and in life.

For the 2015-2016 school year, Principal Vicki Norton initiated a “curbside welcome” program for students arriving by car, on foot, or by bicycle. Mrs. Norton recruited junior high school students to serve as part of the school’s “at your service” welcome team. As cars arrive, volunteers open and close car doors, help unbuckle seat belts, and gather

A little about Smithton School:

Smithton School is a K-8 rural school situated in the southern portion of St. Clair County and considered part of the greater St. Louis Metropolitan Area. Our district has gained a reputation for its successful character education program. The district was honored as a “Homerun School of Character” in May 2015 and named the “Do The Right Thing” Illinois School of the Year in August 2015.

belongings. These students not only greet arriving students, but they greet parents as well.

The program has been well received by students, parents, staff and the community. One parent wrote, “Any time you can interact the older kids with the younger in a supportive role, it will have a positive influence on the younger children and can reduce the chances of bullying.”

Another wrote, “When I get home from work, this is the first thing she talks about every day! She talks



Volunteer students assist younger students at morning drop off.

about a young boy named Camden and how she looks forward to seeing him every morning. She tells me the stories they share on the way to the gym, and what she helps him with. I really think my daughter is much happier in the morning now because of this program - she is making a difference!”

Another parent shared, “There is such a welcoming feeling at Smithton School, especially in the mornings. Upper classmen rush to help students of all ages unload backpacks, sports equipment and instruments safely, yet quickly, allowing parents to scurry off to work. The children appreciate the assistance and are developing relationships in the meantime.”

The following student quotes illustrate the impact the program is having on the volunteers:

- ◆ “Once I started, I realized that it put people in a better mood in the morning just by saying a few simple words like, ‘Good morning, have a great day!’”
- ◆ “Helping the kids in the morning is something that is nice to do and makes me feel good.”



Two of Smithton’s parents, Kurt Schmulbach, left and Sean Adams, right added an element of surprise on a recent morning, when they dressed as super heroes to help the welcome team (the pair co-founded the St. Louis chapter of *Heroes, Cops, and Kids*).

- ◆ “Just telling people, ‘Hello, have a great day!’ or ‘good morning,’ puts us in a more positive attitude for the morning.”
- ◆ “I’m not only helping our younger students, but I’m helping myself become a better person.”

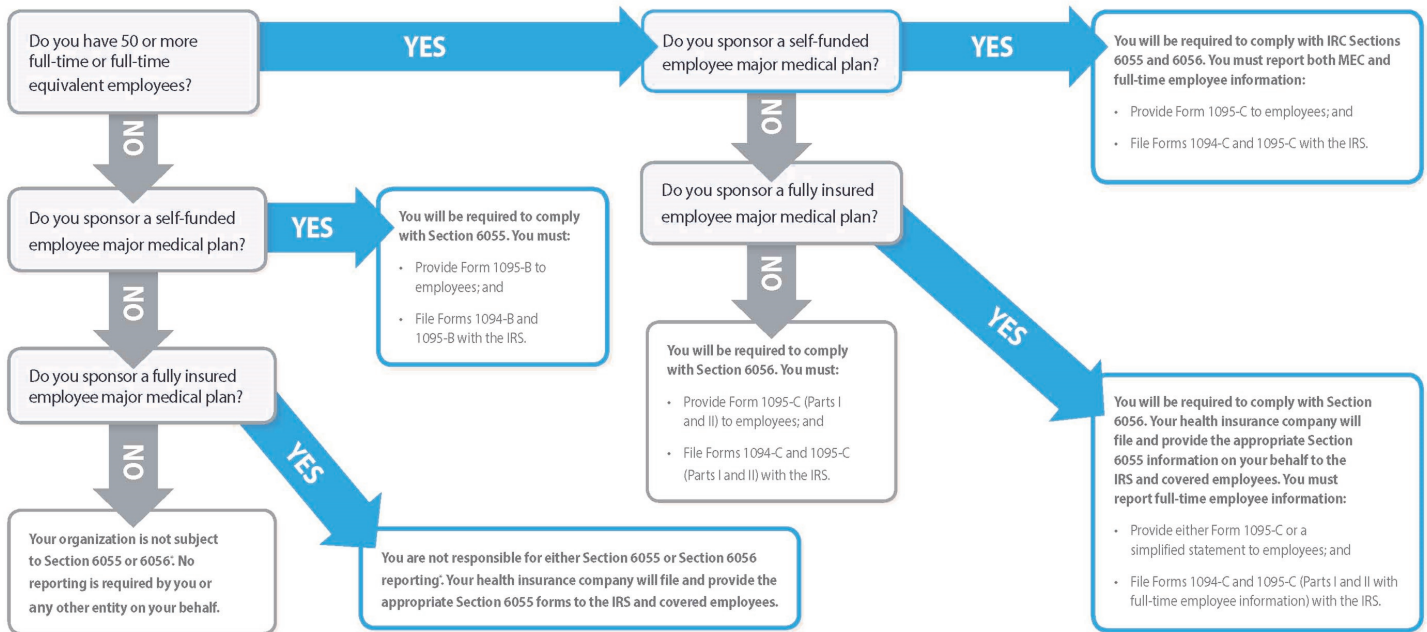
ACA Employer Reporting Obligations



Under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) beginning in early 2016, employers must report to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and disclose to employees detailed data about their workforces and benefit offerings for the 2015 calendar year. Employers may use the flowchart below to help determine who has to file what. More information is available at: HCReducation.com/EmployerReporting. The following is a brief introduction.

All employers with 50+ full-time equivalent employees are required to provide information to employees and the IRS regarding their access to Minimal Essential Coverage (MEC) under Internal Revenue Code

(IRC) Section 6055 and, with respect to full-time employees as defined by the ACA, information of an offer of adequate and affordable coverage under IRC Section 6056. While employers with fully insured major medical plans can rely on the insurer to submit the information on MEC, Employers with insured and/or self-funded major medical plans have the responsibility to report the information under Section 6056 of the offer of adequate and affordable coverage to each full-time employee. This information must be reported using IRS Forms 1094-C and 1095-C. Reporting for each calendar year will be due to the employee by January 31 and to the IRS by March 31 (if filed electronically) of the following year.



This is only a high level summary that reflects our current understanding of select portions of the law, sometimes in the absence of regulations. All of the interpretations contained herein are subject to change as the appropriate agencies publish guidance. The most up-to-date summary of these rules is available on our website at HCReducation.com. American Fidelity Administrative Services, LLC does not provide tax or legal advice and you are encouraged to seek the advice of your legal counsel. Copyright 2015 American Fidelity Administrative Services, LLC.

**Employers with fewer than 50 employees will be required to file Forms 1094-C and 1095-C if they are members of a control or affiliated service group that collectively has at least 50 full-time or full-time equivalent employees.*

SB-30161-0915

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- Critical Illness Insurance
- Annuities
- Pre-Tax Transportation Benefits
- Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (ACA) Guidance
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- Employee Notice and Reporting
- Non-Discrimination Testing
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SB-29854-0815

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Ergo Chairs:

*One Kindergarten teacher shared, "I have loved these chairs...more than I ever thought I would. The kids were great with them!"

*97% (188/194 students) enjoyed using the Ergo chairs and would want to use them again.

*Students noted that they liked the bold colors of the chairs and that they were fun and comfortable. Other specific benefits included that they were good for practicing balance and working core muscles and that they were easy to move around.

Students learning in motion at Windsor Elementary

**By Adam Harris, Communications Coordinator
Arlington Heights School District 25**

Windsor Elementary School, in Arlington Heights, became involved in a literal movement last year, and the Wildcats will keep on moving this school year.

After researching different ways to engage students, Principal Shelley Fabrizio and Assistant Principal Virginia (Ginny) Hiltz used school improvement funds to allow their Wildcats to stay fit while learning by purchasing various fit workstations.

"This was a great experiment," Fabrizio said. "It allowed students to take ownership of their learning because they had to be mindful of when they were feeling engaged and how their physical needs impacted their attention and focus."

Windsor purchased many fit workstations, ranging from standing desks, bike desks, an elliptical desk,

desk cycles to Ergo chairs. These pieces rotated throughout the building in classrooms last year as every student at Windsor had the chance to try at least one piece of equipment. The students were then surveyed (results on page 2) to find out which fit workstation best "fit" their needs.

"Some of the pieces were a huge hit, and others weren't as popular," Hiltz said, "but the bottom line is that students loved the chance to test them out. Many even said they were able to concentrate and focus more on academics while using the equipment and that's what we were after."

There was no question, however, that the Ergo chairs were an all around hit. Windsor purchased six more Ergo chairs at the end of last year, all of which are currently being used every day throughout the school.

DeskCycles and Elliptical Desk:

*Although the 5th graders noted some concerns with noise, sharing the workstations, comfort, and distraction, overall, they enjoyed using them. 87.8% of 5th graders (out of 74 students) enjoyed using the bike desk and 81% enjoyed using the elliptical desk.

*One 5th grader noted, "I like moving to get my extra energy out so that I am not so squirmy while doing my work."

*Another 5th grader noted, "I liked that you could do something while doing your work because normally I am tapping my foot under my desk."

*Other 5th graders noted that they appreciated the extra exercise, the option to move in the classroom instead of sitting, and they also shared a desire to maintain physical fitness overall and saw the bike and elliptical desks as a way to support that.

*One student noted that sitting on the chairs, "made writing more calm because it helped me get some energy out."



Deskcycles:

*92% of students (117/127) liked using the Deskcycles.

*Despite some concerns with the ability to use the cycles under the student desks (due to desk height), students enjoyed the option to exercise during class.

*Students especially liked reading while using the Deskcycles. One student said, "I liked that I could move around without getting out of my desk."

*Another student said, "It helped me learn better and I was able to concentrate more. They were quiet."

Indoor Air Quality Tools for Schools Action Kit



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Worried about the reporting & tracking requirements for ACA?
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We know the Affordable Care Act is new to everyone so we decided to cut through the noise and build a set of simple but powerful tools that won't break the bank

How does the ISEBC Help?



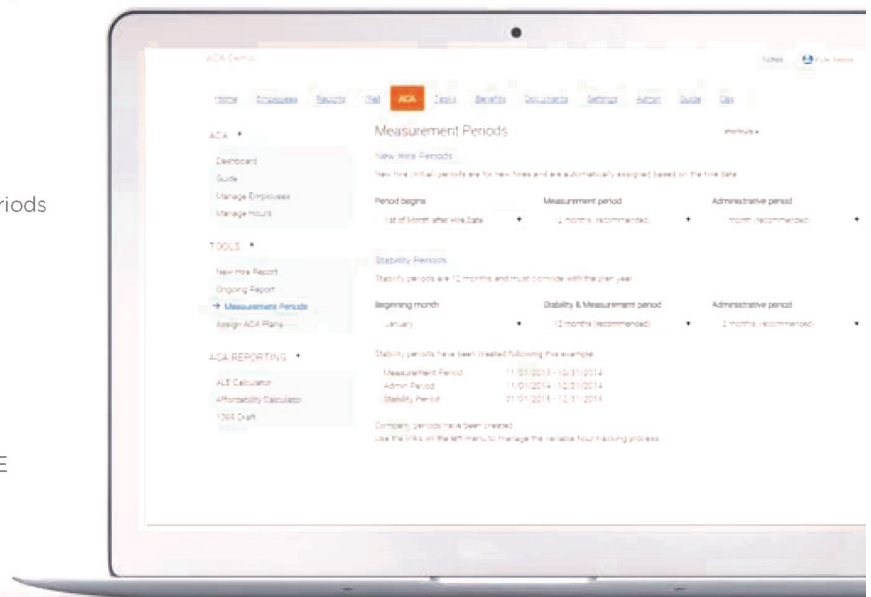
Eligibility tracking for hourly employees

- Set-up stability and administrative periods
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The best data collection tool for 1094/1095 reporting

- Track and categorize your employees
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A bureaucratic nightmare

So you don't think you need a system; think again. Employers are required to compile monthly hours worked for all hourly employees, categorize owners and seasonal employees and more. Finally companies need to track eligibility periods for all employees as well as offers of coverage & enrollment dates. Did we mention that the data also needs to be totaled on the 1094-C?

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You are considered an Applicable Large Employer (ALE) under The Affordable Care Act if your company has 50+ full-time (FT) employees or equivalents. Compliance with the ACA employer mandate in 2015 is based on the size of your company in 2014.

Are you ready to give employees a 1095-C?

ALE's must give every employee a 1095-C each January which details health insurance enrollment and affordability information. The data itself isn't complicated, compiling it from multiple systems, now that's another story.

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Student proficiency vs. student growth



By Dr. Richard Voltz, IASA Associate Director/ Professional Development

Like many of you, I was shocked when I recently read that zero percent of Illinois high school students exceeded standards on the 2015 PARCC Math assessment. While I understood that the first year of administration had been difficult, this result was hard to reconcile. (See results in the chart below.)

I realized that I needed a better understanding of what results to expect. This inspired me to research what PARCC is testing and the goal of the assessment. Specifically, I had three questions:

- ◆ What is the goal of the New Illinois Learning Standards?
- ◆ How do we compare with what we could have expected?
- ◆ How do we use these results to understand student progress?

As many of you know, of the 42 states and District of Columbia that originally adopted Common Core, three states have rescinded their adoption: Indiana, South Carolina and Oklahoma (though, many have noted that Indiana and South Carolina’s standards look a lot like Common Core). The PARCC consortium originally had 24 states, and 12 states administered the assessment including Illinois. Since the administration,

Missouri, Maine, and Ohio have decided to change assessments. And so far, Ohio and Illinois have released preliminary state data, though Ohio changed the reporting categories agreed to by the PARCC consortium (the cut scores are the same, but Ohio labelled a score of three as “proficient”, as opposed to “approached expectations”).

One of the stated goals of Common Core was to create internationally benchmarked standards. According to the Common Core [website](#):

“One of the ways to analyze education systems is to compare international assessments, particularly the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Prior to the development of the Common Core State Standards, research revealed striking similarities among the standards in top-performing nations, along with stark differences between those world-class expectations and the standards adopted by most U.S. states. As a result, standards from top-performing countries were consulted during the development of the Common Core State Standards. The college- and career-ready standards appendix lists the evidence consulted.”

So do the results that PARCC is providing align

PARCC test Math statewide preliminary results

Note from Illinois State Board of Education: These results are not fully representative of all students. Students who completed braille, Spanish or ASL forms, and those who tested using a paper form are not included. Results at the high school have been aggregated due to small testing volumes in particular courses. Districts were allowed to choose the high school assessments that they would administer by level (e.g. ELA and Algebra I/Integrated Math I), and therefore the results of any one course-based assessment cannot be interpreted as representative of overall Illinois performance.

◆ Grade Level	◆ Percent of Students Who Exceeded Expectations	◆ Percent of Students Who Met Expectations	◆ Percent of Students Who Approached Expectations	◆ Percent of Students Who Partially Met Expectations	◆ Percent of Students Who Did Not Meet Expectations
3	5	31	26	25	13
4	2	26	27	31	14
5	3	24	31	29	13
6	3	23	31	30	13
7	2	25	34	29	10
8	3	28	22	27	20
H.S.	0	17	24	37	22

with the international tests? PISA places just 2 percent of students of US students as “Advanced” (it should be noted that few countries have over 5 percent of students at “Advanced”).

The PARCC assessment is described as a proficiency test. It is intended to tell us what students should know and be able to do at a certain grade levels. But, these results should not be that surprising as U.S. student scores have shown low performance levels for years compared to other higher performing countries. “Exceeded” expectations seems to align with the expectations of four-year selective institutions. In fact, the zero percentage high school students achieving an “Exceed” in math is similar to the 2 percent of high students who score a 33 or higher on the ACT math portion. (View results [here](#)). Given the issues with administration this year and lack of clarity around who took the test at each high school, this score is not that surprising. And providing all students with a clear picture of what it takes to reach this level can be seen as equitable.

The problem for public school administrators and teachers is trying to explain to the public and parents why these results need some interpretation. Illinois State Superintendent Dr. Tony Smith, in a letter to Illinois superintendents, stated that the scores are lower than the previous scores because this is a new test that is aligned to new standards and this is the first year of the test. He explained that scores will improve as teachers and students become more familiar with the higher standards. But that still leaves families and communities wondering how to assess the quality of their schools.

In reality, the state has been moving to a new approach to evaluate schools for a while. Rather than looking at proficiency rates, which are an important goal – but not really an effective measure -- state policy has moved towards looking at student growth. Student growth is described to be the growth an individual student makes from the beginning of the instructional period until the end of the period. This move has been most evident in educator evaluation. For example, it was reported to the PEAC (Performance Evaluation Advisory Committee) that one school district’s growth score for all teachers averaged 3.5 on a 4 point scale, even though many of those students would probably have fallen into the lower categories of the PARCC assessment. This means that the district reported high student growth and subsequent high teacher ratings because the teachers took the students they had, at the ability level they entered the class, and showed the growth the teacher was able to achieve.

This is going to be a difficult discussion for public

school administrators and teachers to make to parents and the public. It is my opinion most parents think their child’s school does a good to excellent job growing their students. Parents inherently understand growth, and the disconnect between what parents see and proficiency scores has been troubling. If they simply look at proficiency they are likely to ignore the PARCC results and instead celebrate their child’s report card results. And the reality is that we will not know much about growth for at least another year.

But I think it is worth turning to the words of Common Core supporters to understand this move. For example, Michael Petrilli, President of the Fordham Institute (a conservative Think Tank) advocates states define “proficient” at a similar level to that set by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (note that 3 percent of Illinois students receive an “Advanced” score on NAEP). The author further states: *“the United States as a whole has never gotten more than 40 percent of its high school graduates above the ‘college-ready’ level. [on NAEP].”*

But it also advocates against the over-reliance on proficiency for rating school effectiveness. In an article titled [“The problem with proficiency”](#), the author writes: *“Proficiency rates are terrible measures of school effectiveness. As any graduate student will tell you, those rates mostly reflect a school’s demographics. What is more telling, in terms of the impact of a school on its students’ achievement and life chances, is how much growth the school helps its charges make over the course of a school year.”* In other words, proficiency rates should be communicated to the public and parents but schools and teachers should be rated by “student growth.”

[The New York Times reported](#) “65.9 percent of people who had graduated from high school the previous spring had enrolled in college.” [The National Center for Educational Statistics report](#) “The 2013 6-year graduation rate for first-time, full-time undergraduate students who began their pursuit of a bachelor’s degree at a 4-year degree-granting institution in fall 2007 was 59 percent. That is, 59 percent of first-time, full-time students who began seeking a bachelor’s degree at a 4-year institution in fall 2007 completed the degree at that institution by 2013.”

Thus, in my analysis, if 66% of high school graduates enroll in college and then 59% graduate within six years, then an estimated 39% of high school graduates graduate from college. I would assume this means they are “college ready” if they graduate. This statistic is far more than the 17% of Illinois students who met or exceeded expectations on the PARCC. I think the cut scores are not set correctly.



Illinois Association of School Administrators (IASA) Uses Website to Connect Employers with Job Seekers.

The Illinois Education Job Banksm has been redesigned to combine a more user-friendly interface, professional layout and enhancements such as the ability to apply online and manage resumes and vacancies easier. Whether you are seeking qualified applicants to fill permanent, interim, part or full-time vacancies, the Illinois Education Job Banksm makes posting jobs and finding candidates as easy as **1-2-3!**

With over **1,000** Illinois school districts and other educational institutions subscribing to the Illinois Education Job Banksm, the proof is in the numbers. Since 1999, the Job Bank has provided the opportunity for more than **75,000** vacancies and **100,000** profiles to be posted online.

FOR EMPLOYERS...

You can post vacancies and find candidates with ease and security.

New and enhanced features include the following:

- Quick and easy account setup
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- Maintain low costs with minimal yearly fee
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FOR JOB SEEKERS...

You can search, save resumes and apply online for **free**.

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- Save and update your profile information including education, certification, employment, references, skills and more
- Set up convenient e-mail job alerts and notifications
- Save job listings, searches and applications

www.illinoiseducationjobbank.org

Getting to know your IASA/ISBE Advisory Committee members



Bill Fritcher **Wabash Valley Region**

School district: Teutopolis Unit 50

One thing you would like people to know about your school district: We have more people working in our community during the day than

we have sleeping here at night. There are jobs for those who want to work.

Years as educator: 27

High school: Altamont High School

Colleges or Universities: Lakeland College and Eastern Illinois University

Family: Wife - Julie is a teacher in Neoga; daughter - Hannah is a senior at Butler University; son - Evan is a sophomore in high school

Favorite hobby: Cardinals baseball, Blues hockey, and Butler basketball

Favorite movie: N/A

Favorite book: Anything by Malcolm Gladwell

Favorite musical artist: No favorite. I will listen to all genres.

One thing people probably would be surprised to know about you: There is not much people do not know about me. I am an open book.

Biggest concern about public education: I think we will have a shortage of qualified teachers in the near future. We have to find a way to make education a desirable career again.

Most encouraging thing about public education: I am beginning to see more collaboration between districts. For example, in Effingham County the five public districts and parochial schools are working together on several projects right now. That is encouraging.

Lindsey Hall **Central Illinois Valley Region**

School district: Morton CUSD 709

One thing you would like people to know about your school district: There are great things happening in public education in Morton.

Years as educator: 25

High school: Boulder High School, Boulder CO

Colleges or Universities: University of Colorado, WIU, EIU, Univ. of Illinois @ Urbana/Champaign

Family: Husband of 23 years, four grown children, one grandson, one grandchild on the way

Favorite hobby: Running

Favorite movie: *The Right Stuff*

Favorite book: *Unbroken*

Favorite musical artist: Anything classic rock

One thing people probably would be surprised to know about you: In 1980, I accompanied my parents and spent 100 days on a ship sailing around the world. Started in San Francisco, ended in Fort Lauderdale.

Biggest concern about public education: Continual, unrelenting mandates that are often disjointed, ill-planned and consume valuable resources, regular and unwarranted criticism from the public, and a barrage of poorly thought out ideas from politicians and others who are "experts" simply because they went to a school. While responding to mandates, requests, new initiatives and other "red tape," our valuable time as instructional leaders is stolen away from our most important resource: children.

Most encouraging thing about public education: We welcome all children through our doors at any time on any day. The reality is that public schools, overall, are doing a great job in educating a populace with varying and demanding needs and we do so in an environment of shrinking resources and massive bureaucracy. Public schools are filled with valuable, knowledgeable and dedicated employees who love children, and parents who entrust us every day to care for their precious kids.





Success in Illinois School Districts

Rockford 205 - Dr. Ehren Jarrett, superintendent

East High School in the Rockford 205 school district received a gift — actually 175 gifts — from Naperville Central High School in the form of gently used band uniforms. East's uniforms had dated back to the 90's and were in major disrepair. The East High School Marching Band is seen playing during the East Pep Parade held September 25 in their new uniforms. The uniforms are valued at \$300 apiece.



Woodridge 68 - Dr. Cathy Skinner, superintendent

Comcast SportsNet Chicago filmed students from Edgewood Elementary School in Woodridge School District 68 for a commercial promoting the NHL Chicago Blackhawks and the upcoming hockey season.






IASA News in Brief



2015-2016 School Calendar now available

The 2015-2016 IASA School Calendar has been uploaded. You can view the calendar [here](#).



Tom Bertrand to be inducted into Illinois State University Hall of Fame



Rochester Superintendent Dr. Thomas Bertrand will be inducted October 23 into the Illinois State University College of Education’s Hall of Fame. Bertrand will be one of six inductees during the Homecoming festivities at ISU. The university’s news release noted that Bertrand, who received his Ph.D. in Educational Administration from ISU in 2002, “has dedicated his career in education to helping students, teachers and school administrators to realize their potential. His efforts and accomplishments in school leadership were recognized in 2015 when he was named IASA’s Illinois Superintendent of the Year.”

He accepted his first teaching position in 1985 at Mid-County High School after earning his bachelor’s in education from Quincy College. He later served as an English and social studies teacher, as well as a wrestling and football coach at Pittsfield High School. He then taught English at Mendon Unity Junior and Senior High School. During this time, Bertrand earned his master’s in educational administration from Western Illinois University. And at age 26, he became the principal of Mendon Unity, leading a faculty that included his own former high school English teacher.

For the past 23 years, Bertrand has served Rochester Community Unit School District 3A (RCUSD) in downstate Illinois, the last 13 coming as superintendent. As the leader of RCUSD, Bertrand directed the overhaul of technology infrastructure to deliver one-to-one computers and Wi-Fi access for all students and staff—including on school buses. He has also prioritized differentiated professional development for faculty and staff as well as the creation of a now nationally acclaimed bullying prevention program.

Throughout his career, Bertrand has sought out ways to support school and administrator development throughout Illinois. In connection with IASA, he serves as a leadership coach and mentor to superintendents, and is a trusted consultant to Illinois Regional Offices of Education on the subject of school improvement.

In an effort to support the next generation of school leaders, Bertrand serves as an adjunct professor teaching graduate level educational leadership at Eastern Illinois University. He previously served as an adjunct at the University of Illinois-Springfield.

ISDLAF+ October 2015 Monthly Update



Click [here](#) to view the October 2015 ISDLAF+ rates, economic indicators and general economic news brief. To obtain additional information regarding this IASA sponsored service, contact Donald E. Weber, Senior Vice President, Corporate Relations/ISDLAF+ at 630.657.6435. To check daily rates, visit the ISDLAF+ website at

October 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 IASA Annual Conference	2 IASA Annual Conference	3
4	5	6 Shawnee Region Meeting	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14 DuPage/ Illini Region Meeting IASA-ISBE Advisory Cmte meeting	15 CIV Region meeting	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27 Super Region Mtg. with State Supt. Dr. Tony Smith NORMAL	28	29	30 Southwestern Region Meeting	31

Click on a color-coded date to open a link for more information about the event.

IASA Event

Professional Development Event

Legislative Event

Region Meeting (Contact your Region President for details)

November 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4 Cook West Region meeting	5	6 Kaskaskia / Three Rivers Region meeting	7
8	9	10	11	12 Cook South Region meeting	13 Cook North Region meeting	14
15	16	17	18 DuPage Region meeting	19 IASA Board of Directors meeting	20 Western Region meeting	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Click on a color-coded date to open a link for more information about the event.

**IASA
Event**

**Professional
Development
Event**

**Legislative
Event**

**Region
Meeting
(Contact your
Region President
for details)**



The Illinois Principals Association has identified building administrators' top learning needs and designed the **2015 Education Leaders Fall conference & Exhibition** to meet those needs for improving performance and building organization capacity.

Capacity building is the process of developing and strengthening skills, instincts, abilities, processes and resources that organizations need to survive, adapt, and thrive in a fast-changing world.
~ Wikipedia

Won't you please support your building administrators' attendance at the **IPA Fall Conference?**



Mission Statement:

The Illinois Association of School Administrators will support school leaders in the pursuit of educational excellence through continued school improvement.



Membership includes:

◆ Legal Support Program

IASA's in-house attorney provides legal counsel regarding superintendent contracts and legal assistance in job-related legal actions or proceedings.

◆ Return of Dues Program

A payment proportionate to the amount of dues paid during the past 10 consecutive years is made to a member's beneficiary upon an active member's death.

◆ Mentoring

Whether it is through one-on-one contact with the IASA Executive Director or through one of the Field Services Directors, members have quick access to experienced school administrators.

◆ Legislative Advocacy

IASA's governmental relations director tracks legislation that affects public education, lobbies on behalf of IASA's positions and keeps members informed with *Capitol Watch* updates and analysis.

◆ Professional Development

IASA's professional development director offers timely academies, workshops and blogs that provide helpful instruction to deal with emerging issues facing school leaders.

◆ Communications Services

IASA's communications director assists superintendents in the development of talking points, media statements or letters to parents regarding issues that arise in a school district.

◆ Conference Opportunities

IASA's Annual Conference in the fall and its biennial Alliance Leadership Summit in the spring offer members the opportunity to hear from nationally known speakers and to network with colleagues from throughout the state.

Renew your membership or join IASA today

For more information or to join or renew online, go to the IASA website at www.iasaedu.org and click on the Membership Tab at the top of the page.

If you have any questions, please contact Misti at 217.753.2213 or mmurphy@iasaedu.org.

Stunning design, sharp communication

Congratulations to Barrington 220 School District, Community Unit School District 308, and Evanston/Skokie School District 65 on their brilliant new websites! Their responsively designed websites adapt to all devices, house family and community resources, and directly connect with social media for modern communication.



Community Unit School District 308
Oswego, IL

Evanston/Skokie School District 65
Evanston, IL

Barrington 220 School District
Barrington, IL

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