



October 2016

A photograph of a tree with vibrant yellow and orange autumn leaves, set against a clear blue sky. The tree branches and leaves fill the left and bottom portions of the page, extending towards the center.

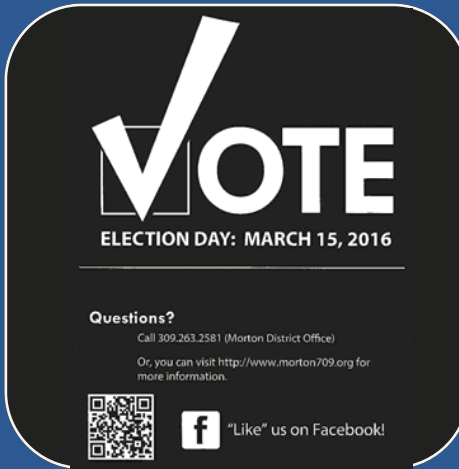
**Election uncertainty
casts long shadow**

**School safety
complex issue
that demands
attention**

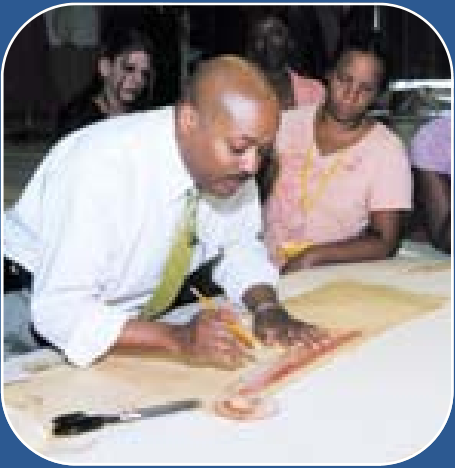
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Conference behind us, the election now looms



Message from the Executive Director Dr. Brent Clark

The 52nd Annual IASA Conference is now in our rear-view mirror, but there's plenty of action in front of us as we head toward what could be one of our most consequential elections in memory, possible "lame duck" sessions after the election, and decisions being made regarding a new funding model for Illinois public schools for the first time in 20 years.

We still are going through the written evaluations of our conference, but the feedback so far has been quite positive. Personally, I thought it might have been our strongest overall conference in my 11 years as executive director. The lineup of general session speakers was very dynamic, we also had a tremendous array of breakout sessions, and the Ignite session got rave early reviews as people seemed to really like the fast pace and wide menu of topics. Some attendees also mentioned they liked the fact that we highlighted home-grown Illinois programs and superintendents.

The work on next year's conference will begin soon, so if anyone has suggestions we would love to hear them.

We did unveil a new mobile IASA app at our conference, and I encourage you to check it out. It can be downloaded free from Google Play or the App Store, or by scanning the QR code on this page. We think this is another great tool to assist us in getting you timely IASA information using platforms that are most convenient for you.

Evidence-based model stays at forefront of discussion

The Governor's Commission on School Funding Reform has continued to meet, and the Evidence-Based Funding Model appears to be at the forefront of discussion. There still is a long way to go and a lot of moving parts, but there is enough momentum that it appears that school funding reform might actually finally happen – and that the evidence-based model that was brought forward by the Vision 20/20 coalition has the chance to be a big part of the solution.

Of course, no school funding plan will be effective

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in closing the adequacy gap unless there is enough money to fund the plan. Everyone understands that new sources of state revenue are absolutely necessary to fund schools and other vital services. The problem is the political stalemate that currently exists. And there is no guarantee that the upcoming election on November 8 will change anything.

Will upcoming election change political landscape in Illinois?

From purely a viewing perspective, the dynamics of this election are incredible – from the unorthodox battle of polar opposites running for president to the in-state proxy war being fought between Governor Bruce Rauner and House Speaker Michael Madigan at the state legislator level. We're talking tens of millions of dollars being funneled into individual statehouse races by both sides.

But will anything break the logjam? Barring some unforeseen tidal wave favoring one side or the other, it looks pretty much like status quo may be the winner when the sun comes up on November 9. Those results will set the stage for the veto sessions, scheduled for November 15-17 and November 29-December 1, and this may prove to be either the slowest veto session in recent history or one of the most captivating. No middle ground is likely.

Of course, with history as a guide, there is a greater possibility that action could heat up between New Year's Day, 2017, and when the new General Assembly is sworn in in mid-January. Unlike the veto sessions, that particular period is a time when legislative action again requires only a simple majority in each chamber and the "lame ducks" – the outgoing members – would be free to vote on controversial measures without fear of political consequences.

Brent

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Lessons learned: School safety is complex issue that demands attention



Dr. Steve Webb is in his 24th year as an educator and in his 14th year as Superintendent of Goreville Community Unit District 1. He also has been a sworn law enforcement officer since 2010, serving as a part-time police officer for the Goreville Police Department and, in addition to

his superintendent's duties, he also serves as the School Resource Officer.

Throughout my 23 years of being a school administrator, I have dealt with students who would later be convicted of armed robberies or even homicide. I have had these students walk the halls with hundreds of other children only to find out that something in life caused them to become ultra-violent. Something in their mind told them that what they were doing was somehow justified. The question that is consistently on my mind still today is what if they had experienced this event while they were in school? What if they had decided that today was the day they would live on in infamy? *What if...?*

I still vividly remember the day, December 1, 1997. I was principal at a small rural high school in southern Illinois. I was going about my day quite normally when one of my teachers ran frantically into my office and told me that there was a shooting at her son's school and she couldn't get in touch with him and she had to go try to find him. I still

Remember when you dropped your child off for his or her first day of kindergarten? Remember the tears of dismay at the question of how they could possibly grow up that fast, or perhaps that you were starting a new chapter in their precious life and would never again get those days back that you spent with them in their infancy?

Today, in 2016, we have another reason for tears that is becoming more prevalent with every breaking story. As parents, we are becoming scared to drop our children off because of the thought that there might be another Sandy Hook, or Columbine, or pick any other school related crisis that media has sensationalized to the point that it appears to be some type of global pandemic along the lines of the Bubonic Plague.

School safety has never been more widely discussed nor more vastly criticized than it is today. How much "school safety" is enough? How much is it worth to keep our children safe? How much training can we possibly take that would prevent a catastrophe? These are just a few of the myriad questions that arise in our community forums, in our task forces and even in our coffee shops. Obviously, there is no "enough" when it comes to keeping our children safe.



remember the look of despair and pure fright on her face as she left my office and headed toward her vehicle. Her son attended Heath High School in Paducah, Kentucky. Our school essentially stood still as we all clamored to our televisions to find out what was going on just across the river. She later called to inform us that she had heard from her son and that he was ok – but three children lost their lives that day and five others were

wounded. *What if...?*

We, as educators, by state law are considered "*en loco parentis*" (in the place of a parent). Just as we have protections from legal liability when it comes to operating our schools with our best efforts under whatever circumstances are effecting us, we have a moral obligation to keep our children safe so that they can grow and learn. We have a duty. "We," meaning society as a whole and as an equal partner.

With that being said, the first step to any intervention is to admit we have a problem. It is a

problem that we remember the names of school shooters from decades ago. They are murderers whose names should be forgotten, but whose deeds should be remembered and studied. How many times did you hear Adam Lanza's name in the weeks and months after Sandy Hook and even still today? How many times was this the lead story on the national news?

It is a problem that doctors are prescribing highly addictive mind-altering anti-anxiety narcotics to elementary school aged children – or any children for that matter. According to the Citizens Commission on Human Rights International, at least 35 school shooters or instances of school related violence were committed by those under the influence of psychiatric drugs.

It is a problem that some children believe suicide is their only option to deal with a stressor in their life. According to the Center for Disease Control, suicide is the second-leading cause of death of young people aged 10-24 and occurrences are even worse in rural and remote areas. In fact, according to the Jason Foundation and the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), there are approximately 5,400 suicide attempts *per day* by children in grades 7-12 in the U.S. alone.

Obviously, Dylan Klebold and Eric Harris were

suicidal and were convinced that they were going to take out as many humans as they could that day in Littleton, Colorado before putting an end to their own lives. Harris was reportedly on the antidepressant Luvox and both had attended anger-management sessions. They had reportedly been planning the attack for over a year, so this was not a “they snapped” form of psychoneurosis. They prophesized that they would be “famous” – and they were apparently right as there is even a video game that is free to all that idolizes the killers and mimics their actions that tragic day. Put simply, we clearly have problems that we must deal with today if we are to be able to protect our children tomorrow and we, as educators, can't do it all alone.

As a law enforcement officer with our local police department and a member of the DCFS Child Death Review Team for the southernmost 37 counties of Illinois, I unfortunately see more disturbing societal aberrations than the normal school administrator. I have reviewed autopsies of horrific crime scenes and I have executed search warrants on murderers. I have been confronted with a young adult that wanted to commit suicide-by-cop on one of the two major interstates that pass through our county. All of this within a short distance of our school. Less than five miles separate us from what could only be

October 16-22 is America's Safe Schools Week

The National School Safety Center (NSSC), state governors and state school superintendents sponsor America's Safe Schools Week, October 16-22, 2016. This observance is also actively supported by local, state and national public officials and professional organizations.

Significant progress is being made to ensure that all of our nation's schools are safe, secure and productive. At the forefront of this movement are hundreds of exemplary school, district, state and national programs. To recognize these successes and encourage others, October 16-22, 2016, has been proclaimed America's Safe Schools Week. NSSC invites you to participate in this annual observance that was originally established by the National School Safety Center in 1984.

NSSC's goal in this campaign is to motivate key education and law enforcement policymakers, as well as students, parents and community residents, to vigorously advocate school safety. School safety includes keeping campuses free of crime and violence, improving discipline, and increasing student attendance. School that are safe and free of violence, weapons and drugs are necessary to ensure the well-being of all children and the quality of their education.

While most schools have existing safety programs, these programs often need conscientious, creative application to improve their effectiveness. By clicking [here you can access the NSSC list of ideas and activities](#) that may appropriately be introduced during America's Safe Schools Week. Some of these suggestions may already be part of district or school site programs. Many of these ideas may be initiated and carried out by school-site principals or parents' groups working with local school administrators or by school district public relations directors, working cooperatively with school superintendents and other district administrators.

America's Safe Schools Week provides a unique opportunity for you and your organization to focus on educational issues that directly affect your constituency. We at the National School Safety Center ask you to join the constituents of your state and school community to help the future of this country by observing America's Safe Schools Week, October 16-22, 2016.



Dr. Steve Webb and his wife, Angie, recently visited the Columbine memorial.

considered as catastrophic if it takes one wrong turn.

Do you know what happens around your school every day? Do you know the types of medications your students are taking and what the dangers might be in the community in terms of weapons and drug use? It is time we start asking the right questions and start creating alliances with our local law enforcement and mental health agencies so that we work together to *prevent* a crisis rather than simply to *respond* to a crisis. It is time we funnel resources to facility designs and renovations as well as maintenance programs with a 21st century purpose – sadly with the premise of stopping bullets, preventing unauthorized entry, and having trained authorities on site to counter a possible attack.

It may not be popular, but it is absolutely acceptable for your school to “look like a prison” if that’s what it takes to save just one life. It is time we work together and help parents monitor their children so that they won’t be embarrassed to report if they see something that should concern us. It is time we quit saying to ourselves that “it can’t happen here” –

because it has and it will.

This summer I visited Columbine High School and the beautiful memorial to the children and teacher who died that day. Dave Sanders, the teacher who was murdered, was from southern Illinois. His brother, a long-time friend of mine, asked that I send him a recent picture of his memorial as it had been some time since he had been there. I certainly obliged. While there, we of course read all of the memorials to Dave and the students and all of the sayings that were inscribed on the sprawling wall.

With Columbine students walking about the campus and hidden just beyond their football field, my wife and I moved from one comment to another reading in pure silence. All I could think about was that I hope there is never a need for another school violence memorial. But, as we prepare for the next school day, and as I close this article, I will leave you with one of those inscriptions as it resonates these thoughts in meaning. It reads: *“It brought the nation to its knees, but now that we’ve gotten back up, what have we learned?”*

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Recommendation

Implement School Safety Drill Act

Solution

Set with Illinois Safety Drill requirements, administrators can schedule, log and monitor drills across the district. [Watch this video to learn more!](#)

Recommendation

Adopt the “Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operation Plans” created by FEMA.

Solution

Request the [FREE Safety Plan Wizard](#) from NaviGate Prepared today. Based on the FEMA template, the Safety Plan Wizard removes the jargon and gets right to the point. Simply answer a series of questions and your plan is ready! And it's FREE!

Recommendation

Involve First Responders

Solution

Interactive floor plans give first responders critical information for training as well as actual emergencies. [Watch this video](#) to see how your first responders benefit from NaviGate Prepared.

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Passing a referendum: Building capacity through community engagement



By Lindsey Hall
Superintendent,
Morton CUSD 70

Passing a referendum under any circumstances is hard, hard work -- especially when it more likely than not involves a tax increase. It's made even more challenging these days in a state that is economically and financially dysfunctional and in times where community distrust and scrutiny of public/taxing entities is on the rise.

However, Morton CUSD 709 was fortunate enough to pass a building bond issue in March of 2016. The purpose of this article is to share the groundwork that was laid that led to the successful passage of this referendum in terms of community engagement and communication. First, however, some facts about the Morton Schools: We are a 51 square mile unit district located 10 miles east of Peoria in Tazewell County. Our enrollment, which is steadily growing, exceeded just over 3000 students this year, its highest since 1983. We have six school buildings in the district, the "newest" of which was built in 1977. The last bond issue passed by voters, prior to 2016, was in the early 1970's.

Discussions and meetings about facilities and facilities planning extend back quite a number of years in the Morton Schools. A quick look at a timeline takes us back to 2007—when initial discussions started to take place about a long term facilities plan that would address issues related to growing enrollment and aging buildings.

In 2011, a bond issue failed that would have added space onto three elementary buildings. Due to the failure of that bond issue, the board of education wisely decided to plan and implement a community engagement initiative, utilizing the expertise of Unicom Arc. August of 2012 signaled the start of this initiative, called "709 Connect," as well as the starting time for a new superintendent—me! This was a tremendous learning experience as well as an excellent way for a new superintendent to meet the community. After six community meetings on a variety of topics, it became evident that facilities planning still was an issue.

Due to the continued need for charting a course with facilities, and wanting more community input, the Facilities Advisory Committee was formed and met

REFERENDUM FACT SHEET

MORTON SCHOOL DISTRICT 709



ELECTION DAY: MARCH 15, 2016

What:
A \$10.5 million building bond issue that will cover improvements and/or additions to all six buildings (approximately \$1.5 million of district reserve funds will also be used).

Proposed Plans by Building:

- Lettie Brown:** 1 classroom, 5000 sq ft gym, restrooms, storage
- Grundy:** 2 classrooms, 7000 sq ft gym, restrooms, storage
- Lincoln:** 3 classrooms, 7000 sq ft gym, restrooms, storage
- Jefferson:** new windows
- Morton Jr. High:** remodeling of band area and other classrooms
- Morton High School:** remodeling of band area, outdoor storage/maintenance building

All six buildings will be improved or enlarged

Financing

\$9.4 million paid off over 7 years
\$1.1 million paid off over 2 years
For a total of \$10.5 million

Estimated increase in the tax rate is .27 per every \$100 of EAV

How much will my tax bill go up?

Value of Home	EAV (1/3 of value)	Annual Increase	Monthly Increase
\$100,000	\$33,333	\$74	\$6.17
\$150,000	\$50,000	\$119	\$9.92
\$175,000	\$58,333	\$141	\$11.75
\$200,000	\$66,667	\$164	\$13.67
\$250,000	\$83,333	\$209	\$17.42
\$300,000	\$100,000	\$254	\$21.17

from August through January of 2014. This represented a diverse cross section of our community, worked hard, and brought three options to our board in March of 2014: 1) build a new high school, 2) build a new middle school, 3) build a new 7-8 building. The first two options would involve grade reconfigurations at the elementary/middle levels as well. After discussion by the board, it was decided to take these three options back to the community for discussion, and, in the fall of 2014, "709Connect: Facilities" was planned and carried out. It was a series of four meetings designed to get further input on the three building plans described

above.

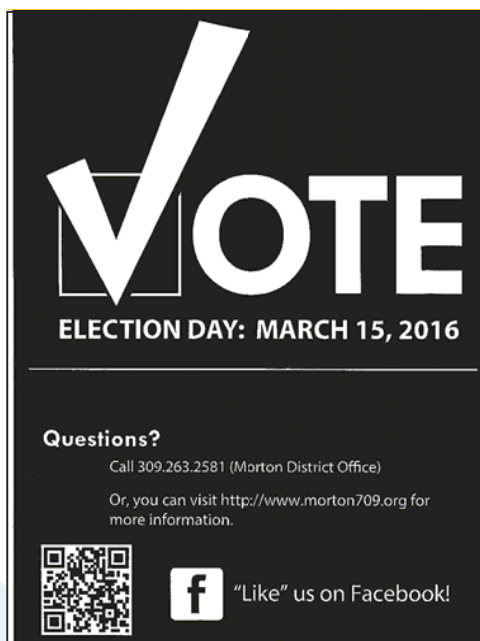
As often happens, the election in April of 2015 brought the opportunity to welcome two new members to our board of education. Different perspectives gave the board the chance to further discuss building options, and it was decided throughout a series of many board meetings in the summer and fall of 2015 to address the “urgent needs” in our school buildings and not move ahead with a bigger building project. In December of 2015, the board voted unanimously to place a \$10.5 million bond issue on the ballot in March of 2016, which was successfully passed by our voters—with a winning margin of 58%.

What are the takeaways from this journey?

- ◆ Combined with formal community engagement efforts, districts must engage in consistent and regularly scheduled communication activities that span the range of the written word, social media, face-to-face meetings, and responding individually to emails and phone calls. Use any means possible to push out information about all topics related the schools. Each community has members who are disconnected with the schools—but these people still vote. Find ways to reach these folks to let them know their opinion is important and their support of the schools is needed.
- ◆ Laying the groundwork and building capacity in any community to pass a bond issue takes, literally, years of conversation and communication. The goal is to build trust through sharing factual information that’s supported with data and ample evidence to support the district’s needs. This is not a quick process.
- ◆ Many options and plans and iterations of plans need to be examined and studied in depth before putting a building bond issue on the ballot. This includes building plans AND financing plans. This requires much time, patience, asking questions and listening to ideas that sometimes aren’t

aligned with yours—but could end up resulting in a more positive outcome.

- ◆ Community engagement initiatives often inspire people in the community to get involved, learn more and take action. In our school district, participants in our community engagement activities ended up successfully running for the board of education and becoming involved in the grassroots “vote yes” group supporting the referendum.
- ◆ Calm, rational, unemotional presentations and discussions are critical for success. With any topic, you will not build capacity or trust if the communication is riddled with emotional, extreme



Calm, rational, unemotional presentations and discussions are critical for success. With any topic, you will not build capacity or trust if the communication is riddled with emotional, extreme language, threats of dire outcomes or other similar tactics. Voters want facts and want to be trusted to go the polls and make informed decisions—not be threatened into voting a specific way.

language, threats of dire outcomes or other similar tactics. Voters want facts and want to be trusted to go the polls and make informed decisions—not be threatened into voting a specific way. Even if it is necessary to have an unpalatable “plan B” if a referendum should fail (for instance, portable classrooms), it’s important to state those outcomes with clarity, and with the definitive knowledge that you will follow through with those plans.

- ◆ Look at any failures or unexpected outcomes as learning opportunities and be frank with the community about those. People appreciate honesty more than “covering up” for miscalculations or mistakes. A failed bond issue can sometimes be the critical step for success in the future.

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AND MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**



Join us in Springfield next February for
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A jointly sponsored event designed for district leadership
teams: the superintendent, school board members,
business officials, and building principals.



IASA IASB IASBO IPA
ALLIANCE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
FEBRUARY 21-22, 2017

- Hear from educational experts and political analysts ✓
- Discuss educational leadership issues ✓
- Engage in the legislative process ✓



Ideally, district representatives would include the superintendent, one board member, one principal, and one business official but any combination is welcome. District superintendents will be responsible for registering the team.

Look for a registration email this fall.

LEADING OUR SCHOOLS IN OUR COMMUNITIES

52nd Annual Conference



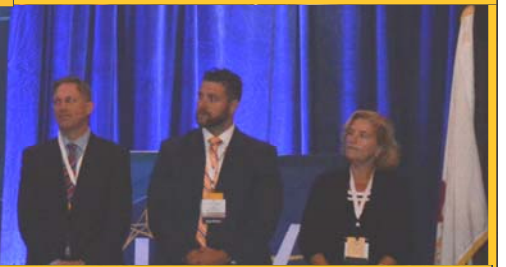
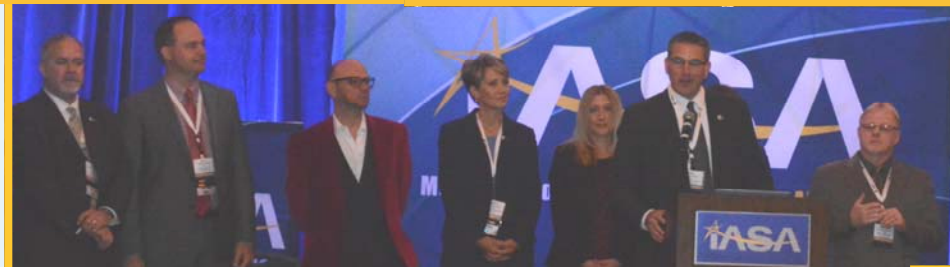
Crab Orchard Elementary School, Jennifer Hancock's third grade class performs the Pledge of Allegiance and National Anthem (top center).

Jennie Magiera, the Chief Technology Officer with Des Plaines CCSD 62, delivers her general session presentation titled "Courageous Edventures: Navigating Obstacles to Discover Classroom Innovation" (center right).

Dr. Jim Burgett (right) receives the IASA Exemplary Service to Education Award from IASA Executive Director Dr. Brent Clark (bottom right).



52nd Annual Conference



Byron Garrett delivers his presentation titled “Transforming Education Through Understanding Our Changing Demographics” (top left).

ISAL graduates are recognized (top right) and Dr. Courtney Orzel talks about the ISAL journey (top center).

The Ignite presenters are recognized (center).

The 5K “Super” Fun Run/Walk drew 31 participants (above). The top two male finishers were Brad Voehringer of Morton Grove (white shirt) and Jim Helton (green shirt) and the top two female finishers were Diane Cepela of Newark (grey shirt) and Julie Harrelson of New Hope (black jacket).

52nd Annual Conference



Paralympian Josh Sundquist delivers his presentation “The Difference You Make in a Day” (top left and middle right). Former NFL player and Fellowship of Christian Athletes national spokes person Steve Fitzhugh (right) spoke at the Fellowship Breakfast. IASA Executive Director Dr. Brent Clark greets IASA President Derek Hutchins (above).

What is ISAL?

[Click to view the ISAL video](#)



Tallman: ISAL journey leads to professional, personal growth

It says something about an experience, or what many of us ISAL graduates actually call a journey, in which you have so much gratification and sense of accomplishment when it is completed, but months later, you wish you were still experiencing that journey. That's what I feel about ISAL.

Amazing superintendents lead by example and make learning a focus every day...I truly believe that there is no other experience that provides this kind of very personal and professional growth. I say personal, because the heart and soul of the program focuses on improving yourself FIRST. Because before any kind of professional growth can occur, you have to fix yourself...grow personally. But professionally, you are exposed to high caliber speakers, and engage in genuine conversations with superintendents from across the state. There aren't many of us, and there aren't many times in which you can genuinely let your guard down for deep reflective conversations...there just isn't. It is THOSE conversations where the true personal and professional growth begins.

Our cohort experienced smiles, laughter, and tears...alongside some karaoke and long dinners, but at the end of the experience, I have a group that I now call some of my closest friends, who I can call at any time for anything.

We've all grown personally and professionally, and the people around us every day gain from that, which ultimately means our districts gain, and even more importantly, our students gain.

I can't recommend this program enough to all of you.



Orzel: ISAL becomes both career- and life-changing experience

Three years ago, I was a new superintendent in a new district and was wondering whether or not the superintendency was for me.

Although I loved my job, I felt extremely isolated and wondered if I should go back to the principalship where I felt more connected and comfortable. I decided to team up with my high school superintendent counterpart to apply for the ISAL program, but I had no idea how life changing it would actually be.

Professionally, the program challenges you to think differently and reflect about how you lead, which ultimately benefits your district. Skilled, trained coaches help guide you through your goals every step of the way.

Personally, when I started the program I was not only a new superintendent, but also a new mom with a 5-year-old son and a 6-month-old baby at home. My son came home on Mother's Day two years ago with a note that said, "My mom loves to work...My mom is really good at working." At that point, I knew I needed a personal change for the sake of my kids. Two years later, his note said, "My mom loves to play Uno and Legos with me." I don't believe that would have happened without the help of ISAL.

ISAL is difficult to explain -- you have to experience it to fully understand its impact. It goes far beyond any other type of typical professional development. The greatest power of ISAL lies in the relationships that you build with others in the cohort. No one knows and understands the job better than another superintendent. ISAL gives you the ability to connect with others around the entire state that you would not otherwise have known and gives you an outlet to connect with other superintendents who understand what you are going through. I would highly recommend the program to any superintendent.

Thornton Fractional and Illinois CSI partner to create great recipe for success

Like many school districts in Illinois, Thornton Fractional School District 215 has grappled with how to use resources to improve achievement among its diverse student population. During the past three years, the district has partnered with the Illinois Center for School Improvement (ICSI) to create a data-driven, collegial culture that enriches the learning experience of its students. Click here to view a video that showcases their efforts: [“On the Road to Transformation, Thornton Fractional School District 215’s Recipe for Success.”](#)

Illinois CSI was created by the Illinois State Board of Education to help leaders from the school districts that have been identified as needing the most support transform their systems to drive higher student achievement. Thornton Fractional’s Superintendent Dr. Creg Williams, the district’s leadership team, and staff from across the district work closely with Illinois CSI to collect data about student achievement and use these data in an intentional manner to guide decisions about school improvement.

“We have always realized the importance of data, but we needed to collect and analyze the right data and use it a meaningful way to help our teachers and students reach their full potential,” said Williams.

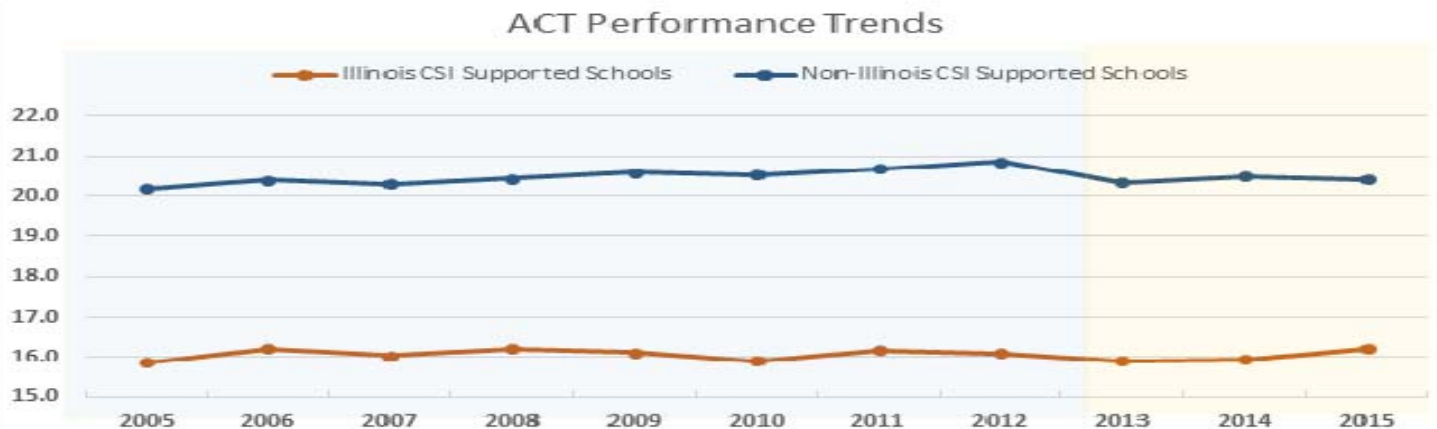


“We are proud to showcase Thornton Fractional School District 215 as one of the many districts in our state making a difference for students. We draw from research-based best practices, grounded in the use of data, to guide districts in making transformative changes in their systems — and they are seeing results.”

-- Dr. Betheny Lyke, Illinois CSI Executive Director

With the goal of improving reading and mathematics outcomes among students, Illinois CSI coached the Thornton Fractional district leaders through the process of creating an instructional review team. This team collaborates to collect baseline data on reading and mathematics practices from each teacher and then uses these data to make systemic changes to improve classroom practice. The instructional review team also is charged with communicating and collaborating with

ACT Test Trends: Illinois CSI-Supported Priority Districts Compared With Non-Supported Districts SY 2005-06 to SY 2014-15



An examination of ACT performance of Illinois high schools shows that Illinois CSI-supported high schools like Thornton Fractional steadily improved, while scores among non-Illinois CSI-supported high schools generally leveled out from a downward trend.



“We have always realized the importance of data, but we needed to collect and analyze the right data and use it a meaningful way to help our teachers and students reach their full potential,”

-- Dr. Creg Williams, Thornton Fractional's Superintendent

staff at the classroom, building, and district levels.

The district also created its own proprietary data dashboard with the ability to view data across the district, by school, and by classroom — drilling down to the student level to analyze and evaluate performance and trends.

Illinois CSI ignited the district work toward transformation by asking probing questions and offering organizational resources and protocols, as well as research on teacher practice, to push the thinking further. As a result, each department developed plans to implement practice changes aimed at improving student outcomes.

“We are proud to showcase Thornton Fractional School District 215 as one of the many districts in our state making a difference for students,” said

Illinois CSI Executive Director Dr. Betheny Lyke.

“We draw from research-based best practices, grounded in the use of data, to guide districts in making transformative changes in their systems — and they are seeing results.”

This data-informed, collaborative approach has resources.

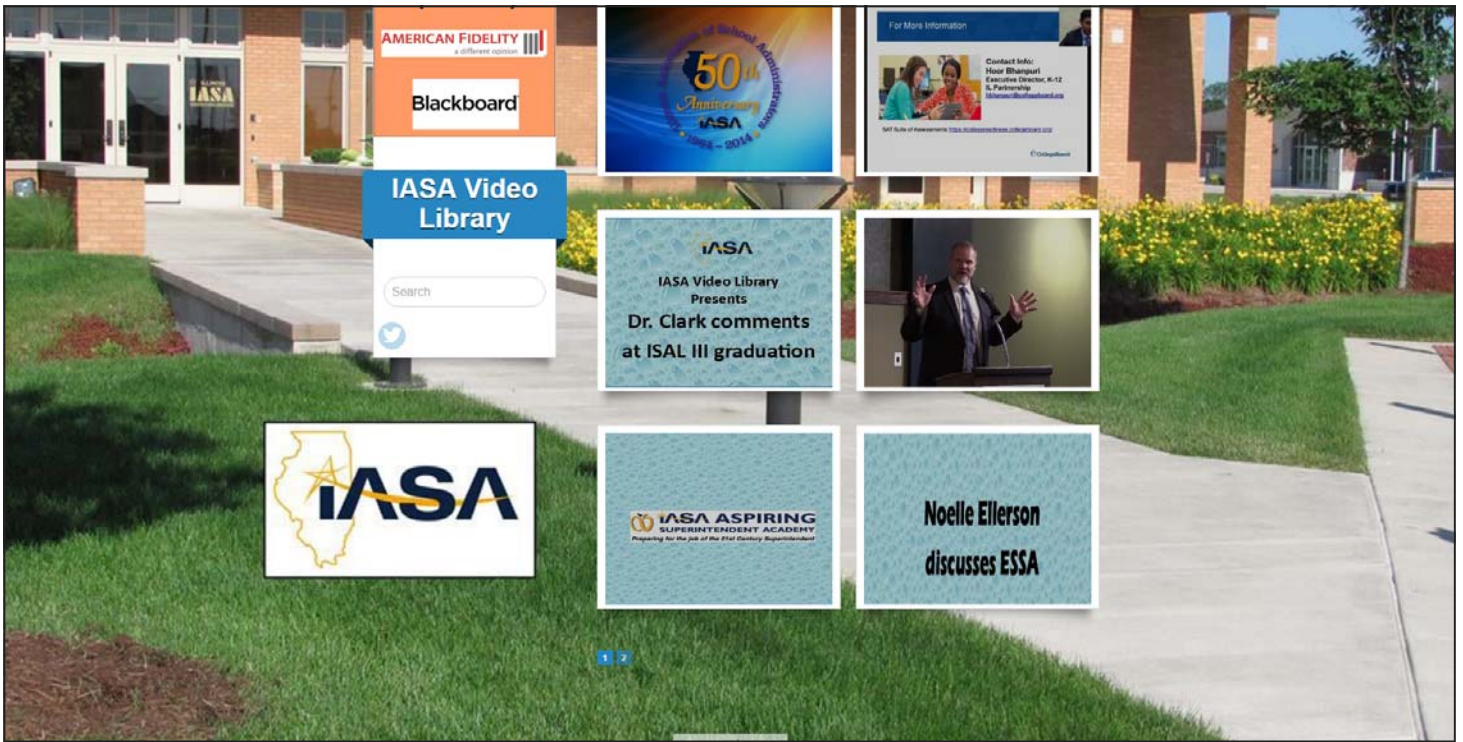
“We are not a rich district, but we have been able to use our finances very wisely and operate very effectively and efficiently for our students and our community,” Williams explained.

Although early in its transformation, the district is beginning to see results of its new data culture. District data show steady increases in student scores in English and reading as well as improvements in graduation rates.

About the Illinois Center for School Improvement

The Illinois Center for School Improvement (CSI), an organization created by the Illinois State Board of Education and American Institutes for Research, provides support for districts with low-performing schools in transforming their systems to ultimately drive higher student achievement. We guide district leaders through building effective leadership teams that make data-driven decisions to implement research-based best practices, with monitoring and feedback loops for continuous improvement. Districts and schools leaders agree that they are making system wide improvements that will lead to transformation. For more information about Illinois CSI, visit www.illinoiscsi.org.





IASA introduces a new face for the Video Library

The Illinois Association of School Administrators is pleased to provide you with access to a Video Library as a benefit of your membership in IASA. The IASA Video Library is a virtual resource that contains video recordings by experts in education. Best practices for educational instruction and curriculum will be highlighted. Sponsored by American Fidelity and Blackboard, the IASA Video Library is available 24 hours a day! You can access the video library from under the Professional Development tab on the IASA website or click [here](#).

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Account Executive
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Chad Kreindler

Account Executive
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Recent Open Meeting Changes

School Districts frequently have concerns about the level of information necessary to be contained on an agenda and within a Motion at a Board meeting as to "sensitive" topics. Over the past several years Illinois Courts and the Attorney General have interpreted the Illinois Open Meetings Act in a manner that makes it risky to take anonymous disciplinary action against an employee.

First, in 2013 the Attorney General determined, in 2013 PAC 25078, that based upon its reading of the Open Meetings Act and applicable Appellate case law the Geneva School District erred when it voted on a Motion to ".Approve the Recommendation for Dismissal of Employee A Due to Performance Concerns". The Attorney General explained that "Because the employee whose termination was recommended was identified only as 'Employee A', the public was deprived of any meaningful information concerning the practical effect of the Board's decision...By declining to identify the subject of the dismissal by name, the Board did not fully comply with the requirements of Section 2(e) of OMA that it 'inform the public of the business being conducted'". As a result of this Opinion School Districts should identify by name any employee to be disciplined within the applicable Motion or Resolution.

In 2014 the Attorney General went a step further. In 2014 PAC 27894 the Attorney General stated that the Village of Easton erred when it reinstated its Police Chief when acting upon an agenda item that merely stated "Discuss and/or Vote on Village Personnel Issue." The Attorney General explained: "It is logical to assume that the General Assembly,...., contemplated that a public body would at least provide a general description of the contemplated action, such as 'discuss and/or vote on matters relating to the employment, performance or dismissal of police officers,' in its agenda...Although Section 2.02(c) does not require that the agenda identify the subject of the possible final action by name or the specific action being contemplated, the Board's agenda item was simply too vague and imprecise to provide any meaningful notice to the public that the Board might take action on the reinstatement or separation'.

In light of this 2014 Opinion, public bodies are well advised to reference within its agenda the category of employee and the general type of possible actions that may be taken with regard to any employment decision.

In December 2015 the Fourth District Appellate Court of the State of Illinois, in the case of Springfield v. Beck (hereinafter "Beck"), provided further guidance to public bodies regarding the specificity required when approving an employment-related Motion or Resolution. In Beck, the Appellate Court upheld the sufficiency of a

relatively simple Resolution made by the Springfield School District to approve a Resignation Agreement between the Board and the Superintendent. The Resolution read "The Board votes to approve the Agreement between Milton and the Board". The Attorney General contended that the Resolution failed to adequately inform the public because the public was not given agreement details



This column is co-authored by Walter J. Zukowski (right) and James S. Peters, who are partners in the Zukowski Law Office in Peru, Illinois. Among their areas of practice, they specialize in school law.

The Appellate Court disagreed. After noting that the subject Agreement was available in its entirety on the District website before the Motion was approved, the Court held that the language of the Resolution was adequate, explaining: "...the Act requires that the public entity advise the public about the general nature of the final action to be taken and does not, as the AG claims, require that the public body, provide a detailed explanation about the significance or impact of the proposed final action."

Would the Beck Court have ruled the same way had the District not posted the Agreement on its website prior to the vote? Perhaps not. The language of the Resolution, taken by itself, did not "...advise the public about the general nature of the final action to be taken..." (that is, the approval of a Superintendent Resignation Agreement.) After Beck, the public body should either (a) post such agreements on their website, or make it otherwise available to the public prior to approving any related Motion or Resolution; (b) orally review the "general nature" of the action at the Board Meeting so that such information is included within the Minutes of the Meeting; or (c) explain the "general nature" as to what the action will accomplish within the language of the relevant Resolution/ Motion.

It should be noted that the legal authority reviewed above specifically relates to employment matters and would have very limited bearing upon student discipline issues. Thus, School Districts can continue the practice of identifying students subject to discipline by number or other indirect means, rather by name, within Motions or Resolutions. When dealing with employee discipline, however, much more care must now be exercised in order to avoid running afoul of the Open Meetings Act.

2016-2017 Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings Tool software available for purchase



All Illinois School Districts are working to comply with the requirements of education reforms. IASA has worked to provide support via the Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File. This program gives districts a method of managing district positions aligned to local qualifications, teacher's credentials, and performance ratings. The program compiles this local data and creates reports needed to comply with Senate Bill 7. The 2016-2017 file has been enhanced with several updates in response to user ideas. The new enhancements include:

- Four new podcasts - [overview](#), transition data, sorting data, and optional merge letter process.
- New method to filter teachers on or off the evaluation cycle.
- Expanded license endorsements and content specific endorsements.
- Ability for users to add license endorsements and content specific endorsements.
- Ability to sort lists of data within the program.
- Ability for districts to add data fields that can be used for inclusion in a merge process and/or for exporting data.
- New report for creating your own merged letters or exporting data for other purposes.
- Only one notification letter per teacher (rather than one for current and more for other eligible positions).
-

The 2016-2017 IASA Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File is ready for you to purchase and download. The access request form can be completed by visiting <http://www.iasasurveys.org>. The cost of using this software did not increase. As such, the annual licensing fee will be \$275 for members and \$550 for non-members.

Please note that previous versions of the IASA Senate Bill 7 Performance Rankings File are no longer supported. Also, the service method for the 2016-2017 software is via email only.



MLB to simplify Cy Young Award Selection process*

**--If baseball were like we measure students, teachers and schools*



Dr. Kevin O'Mara is Superintendent, Argo Community High School and President of the Illinois High School District Organization

MLB (Major League Baseball), in a long overdue decision, has decided to skip the normal selection process and boil the Cy Young Award down to one measurement. Each eligible pitcher will report to Wrigley Field on January 1, 2017 and throw one pitch. The pitch speed will be measured on a radar gun and a MPH number will be recorded. One Cy Young Award will be given to the pitcher who throws the hardest that day.

"The concept of having one winner from each league is flawed and ridiculous," said

MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred. "Let's make the process much more simple and straightforward. The notion that the Baseball Writers' Association of America should vote based on won-lost records, earned run average (ERA), walks & hits per inning (WHIP), complete games, ERA+, strikeouts per nine innings, strikeouts to walks ratio, etc., is senseless. Let's just measure one thing on one day."

A reporter asked, "Why an outdoor stadium in January in a cold weather climate? Won't this impact a pitcher's performance and possibly his health? How many warm-up pitches will each pitcher get? What does the speed of one pitch during the off-season have to do with who is the best pitcher?"

Mr. Manfred retorted, "The date and location are arbitrary...as long as it is the same for all pitchers, a little snow and freezing temperatures aren't a real problem. Don't make it too complicated. The pitchers' salaries will be based solely on this one measurement. As for warm-ups, the answer is none. We're coddling the athletes as it is. My thought? Throw the ball and let's see what happens. May the best pitcher win."

The writer countered, "This is too arbitrary and does not fairly represent who does well in a given season. Different pitchers throw at different velocities and may be equally effective. The current system takes a huge variety of statistical measures and has expert baseball writers evaluate and vote on who is best. This makes more sense."

Mr. Manfred merely harrumphed and said, "Too bad...measure one thing at one time. Even if it doesn't measure overall effectiveness, it makes my life easier. That's the important thing."



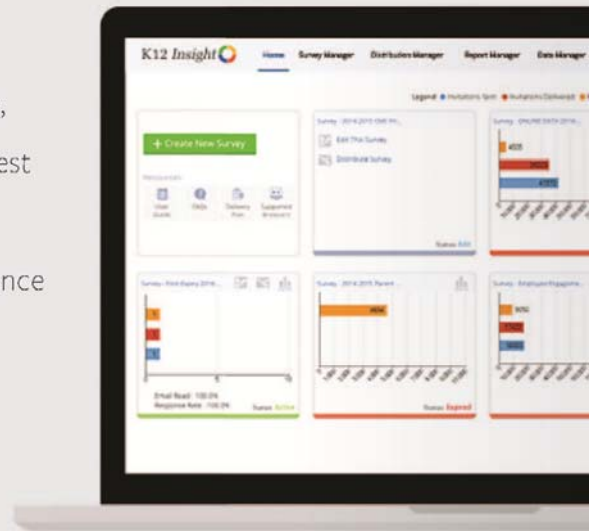
K12 *Insight* helps us move past the anecdotes and distractions. My goal is to ensure each and every stakeholder that their voice counts.”



DR. DANA BEDDEN,
SUPERINTENDENT,
RICHMOND PUBLIC
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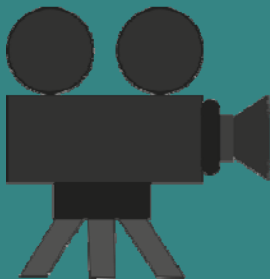
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Videos from the Districts



Mannheim School District 83
Kim Petrasek, Supt.

Student Designed Classrooms
Fremont School District 79
DR. Jill M. Gildea, Supt.



Send your school videos to dcrenshaw@iasaedu.org. We want to highlight what's going on in your school districts.



Why should I give to IPAC?

funds to legislators and candidates who will stand up for public education. Our strength comes from providing legislators with timely and accurate information on legislative matters affecting public education. Victories and successes do not happen overnight but after years of laying the foundation for political change, and a strong IPAC helps us get a seat at the table. We must be proactive rather than reactive and one way to do this is membership in IPAC. Membership in IPAC is a long-term investment that helps lay the foundation for continued change in the legislative process.

IPAC Annual Membership Dues

Our goal is to have every IASA member become a member of IPAC as well. IPAC membership dues are \$100 and 100% of that goes to support the members of the General Assembly that support us.

Personal checks (made out to IPAC) or personal credit cards only

What is IPAC?

IPAC is a statewide, non-partisan Political Action Committee (PAC) organized by members of the Illinois Association of School Administrators to benefit school leaders in the pursuit of educational excellence through continued school improvement.

What is the money used for?

All IPAC membership monies are used for IPAC endeavors, which include, but are not limited to, contributions to the four legislative leaders in the General Assembly and fundraisers for individual legislators who support our educational mission.

Why should I join?

School administrators need a strong PAC to provide



Click [here](#) to make an online payment



Name: _____ Employer:*

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RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP OR JOIN IASA TODAY!

You can do so by filling out and returning the enclosed form with your dues payment. 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 Murphy at 217/753-2213

MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES

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.

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.

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.

LEGAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

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

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.

CONFERENCE OPPORTUNITIES

IASA's Annual Conference in the fall and the Alliance Leadership Summit (held every other year) in the spring offer members the opportunity to hear from nationally known speakers and to network with colleagues from throughout the state.

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.




IASA News in Brief



IPA requests stories to honor principals across the state

October has been designated as National Principals Month to honor and recognize the contributions of principals to the success of students in schools across the United States. Illinois has designated the week of October 16 -22 as Principal Appreciation Week, culminating with Principal Appreciation Day on October 21.

The Illinois Principals Association (IPA) is asking for testimonials of one to three paragraphs, pictures and videos regarding the work your principals do on a daily basis. Over the course of National Principals Month, IPA will share those stories to honor principals across the state. Please send written testimonials, pictures or videos to Drew Thomason, Communications and Marketing Director at IPA, at drew@ilprincipals.org.




Southern Illinois Law and Leadership Conference scheduled for March 29, 2017

The SIU Law and Labor Conference has combined with the Educational Leadership Conference to bring you one fabulous conference for the spring. The theme will be:

Eclipsing the Past: Charting the Future of Public Education on All Levels

Get ready for some new topics, new perspectives, and updates on issues affecting Illinois schools. Our complete program and registration will be available soon at conferenceservices.siu.edu or call 618-536-7751 for more information.

ISDLAF+ October 2016 Monthly Update



Click [here](#) to view the October 2016 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 www.isdlafplus.com.

AASA National Conference on Education

The 2017 AASA National Conference on Education will be held in New Orleans on March 2-4, 2017. Registration and housing opened July 12, 2016. The preferred hotel for the Illinois delegation is the Westin New Orleans Canal Place. Go to <http://nce.aasa.org/> for additional information.

Superintendent of the Year Reception

A reception for the 2017 Illinois Superintendent of the Year is planned for Friday, March 3, 2017 from 5:30 to 7 p.m., at the Riverbend Terrace at The Westin New Orleans Canal Place.



IASA News in Brief



Illinois Association of Christian Administrators to meet at Joint Annual Conference

Being a Christian leader in a public school requires grace and integrity. The Illinois Association of Christian Administrators is hosting its first ever fellowship meeting at the Joint Annual Conference in Chicago on Saturday, November 19. Tim Johnson, Vice President of Field Ministry for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes will deliver the message at the meeting, which will be held at 7 a.m. in Plaza AB of the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

Superintendents earn AASA National Superintendent Certification

Dr. Sonya Whitaker, superintendent of Harvey 152, Jim McKay, superintendent of Community HS 117 and Dr. Andrew Wise, superintendent of Olympia CUSD 16 recently received their AASA National Superintendent Certificates. Click [here](#) to view Dr. Wise's press release.

Leyden Community 212 Superintendent featured in AASA Magazine

Dr. Nick Polyak, superintendent of Leyden Comm HS 212, was featured in the latest AASA Magazine. Dr. Polyak's column was titled "Expanding Your Learning Network via #SuptChat." In his column he wrote, "Social Media often carries negative connotations, but education leaders ought to view it differently. We can leverage the positive power of social media to grow our PLNs and become better leaders for our schools and communities." Click [here](#) access the full article.



Presidential Spirit of Community Awards program open for applications

The Presidential Spirit of Community Awards program is looking for young people who have made meaningful contributions to their communities through volunteer service over the past year. Participating in this program is a great way to reward and call attention to students in your schools who have distinguished themselves through volunteer activities. Deadline to apply is November 8. Additional information can be found [here](#).

Olympia CUSD 16 Superintendent featured in the Huffington Post



Dr. Andrew Wise, superintendent of Olympia CUSD 16, was recently featured in the Huffington Post.

Dr. Wise sees education as a profoundly important mission: "As a society, with the rate at which technology and employment markets change, I would argue that it is a struggle to equip students with the technical skills they need for 2017, let alone 2030. This is why I believe we have to teach students adaptive skills, social skills, emotional skills. We need to help them become masters at how to learn, instead of focusing so much on what content to learn. If our students master how to learn, and have an internal repertoire of skills they can utilize in any situation, then they will be equipped for whatever the market needs in 2017 or 2030." Click [here](#) to access the full article.

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

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 **107,000** vacancies and **112,000** profiles to be posted online.

FOR EMPLOYERS...

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

- Quick and easy account setup
- Maintain complete control of job posting information, posting date and duration
- When you post an opening on the IASA Job Bank, the opening is also included on the school district's website without the school district reposting the information simply by setting up the RSS Feed
- Maintain low costs with minimal yearly fee
- Add customized questions to online applications
- Search for candidate features such as languages, skills and more
- Set up and maintain multiple profiles and users
- Save favorite candidates from job applications

FOR JOB SEEKERS...

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

- Search from hundreds of openings throughout the state
- Create and maintain profiles and resumes in our secure online Job Search Portal
- Save and update your profile information including education, certification/license, employment, references, skills and more
- Set up convenient e-mail job alerts and notifications
- Save job listings, searches and applications
- Set up your employment preferences to help employers find your resume when they search the Resume Bank.

www.illinoiseducationjobbank.org

October 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4 Shawnee Region Mtg	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12 DuPage/ Illini Region Mtg	13 CIV Region Mtg	14 Southwestern Region Mtg	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26 Egyptian Region Mtg	27	28	29
30	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 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 Abe Lincoln, Shawnee, Starved Rock Region Mtg.	2 Cook West, Northwest Region Mtg.	3 Corn Belt Region Mtg.	4 Kaskaskia, Three Rivers Region Mtg.	5
6	7	8 Starved Rock Region Mtg.	9	10 Cook South, Lake Region Mtg.	11	12
13	14	15	16 Du Page Region Mtg.	17 IASA Board of Directors meeting	18	19
20	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)**

Developing a Communications Plan

8 hours of Administrator Academy credit (AA #1568)!

IASA Director of Communications Michael Chamness presents a course designed to offer tips on how to develop messages for your community and the media, how to handle crisis communications, how to spread the good news that is happening in your school district and how to develop a communications plan. The course includes:



- ♦ 3 hours in-person training, with video examples of best and worst practices and participation in mock press conferences involving real-world school issues
- ♦ 5 hours of homework, the end result being a written communications plan for your school district -- a project that can be undertaken as a team of administrators from a school district

**Contact IASA at 217.753.2213
to schedule an Academy
in your area**

