

# FROM-THE-PODIUM

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**Susan L. Harkin**  
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## Supporting Transformation Through Collaboration

The **UPDATE** Magazine is a great example of why I believe we are privileged to be part of the very best profession and why I am so proud to be a member of Illinois ASBO. The **UPDATE** showcases the cooperative spirit of the Illinois ASBO membership and is one of the many Illinois ASBO resources that help us to be successful in our roles. In this issue, there are multiple articles that reflect the breadth of work that school business officials are responsible for and the support provided by members to help us be successful in our roles.

I hope you enjoy the geothermal story by Luann Kolstad. What an innovative way to address the escalating energy costs we are all facing while being conscience of our limited resources! It is exciting to hear Pat Browne's testimonial on earning his Certified Plant Maintenance Manager certification (CPMM). I believe the active participation of our facility members continues to make us a stronger association. Lastly, I am always eager to read the articles from our Service Associate experts. Brad Paulsen's article on capital improvement planning will be a resource I will refer to many times in my tenure as a school business official.

## SIMPLY SAYING

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We are so fortunate to be able to lean on each other, our facility directors and Service Associates to provide the best learning environments for our students.

As you are aware, the breadth of a school business official's responsibility is great and we are so fortunate to be able to lean on each other, our facility directors and Service Associates to provide the best learning environments for our students. I hope you find this issue of the **UPDATE** a valuable resource to support you in your oversight of our school facilities.

As this is my first "From the Podium" article, please know how thrilled I am to serve as your Illinois ASBO President this year. The organization has really transformed over the years and has transformed me as a school business official. I believe we are a stronger association through the collective support and involvement of our professional development committees, regional organizations, Service Associates, educational support personnel and facility directors along with school business officials. It has been exciting to see how the organization is transforming through the cooperative interaction of all of these valued members.

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## Weathering the State Budget Storm

As we head into unprecedented times with our state budget, the theme for this quarter's **UPDATE** could not be more appropriate. Per usual, the Illinois ASBO team has put an exceptional group of articles together to support you in your budgeting efforts.

If you have not heard Ralph Martire speak on our state's structural deficit, I encourage you to read his article very closely. This article provides an excellent overview of the state budget so you can better understand the long-term impact the state budget may have on your school district's budget. Jesse Pleuss' article on the financial implications of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) is an awesome summary on rising healthcare costs related to the implementation of the ACA. This article will be an excellent resource for me as my school district discusses ways to minimize the financial impact of the "Cadillac Tax."



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I encourage you to rely upon your Illinois ASBO family to assist you as we weather the state budget crisis together.

While there are state and federal pressures that are impacting our school district budgets, I am sure many of your superintendents are looking for additional dollars to support new initiatives and programs for your students. There are several great articles to assist you in that arena. Allen Albus, Barry Bolek and Stephen Miller's article on the CFO's use of analytics provides some great ideas on how to review your district finances in ways that may allow you to stretch your resources or find ways to reduce your expenditures. Perhaps Ric King, Todd Covalut and Seth Chapman's article can provide a new perspective on school site budgeting that can assist with freeing up dollars for new initiatives.

Lastly, it is more important than ever to develop a budget that meets your stakeholders' needs. Take a peek at John Reiniche's article for some insight on what your stakeholders may be looking for in your annual budget presentation. For those of you who may be new to the budgeting process, check out Jim Fritts' Beginner's Guide to Budgeting on pg. 20.

Each **UPDATE** tries to meet the varied needs of our readership. While we may be in one of the most difficult budget cycles ever, I encourage you to rely up on your Illinois ASBO family to assist you as we weather the state budget crisis together.

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## Engaging in Your Leadership Development

This month's **UPDATE** focuses on a topic near and dear to my heart: Leadership. As I entered the Chief School Business Official (CSBO) ranks, no schooling prepared me for the art of leadership. Yet, much of our individual success hinges on our ability to be effective leaders. I hope this issue of the **UPDATE** provides you with some exceptional resources to help you be a highly effective leader in your role.

I have heard it said that you either have leadership qualities or you don't, but I believe you can develop your leadership skills through hard work. If you feel that your leadership qualities have improved over time, please read the article "Five Keys to Being an Effective Mentor" so you can help develop another leader in our profession. If you are new to the school business arena or will be taking on a new role in the future, "The First 100 Days" can be an exceptional resource to help you step off on the right leadership foot as you enter your new position.



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I have heard it said that you either have leadership qualities or you don't, but I believe you can develop your leadership skills through hard work.

I have been fortunate to partake in the Leadership Institute and have used this training to better understand my co-workers' leadership styles. If you have not participated in this training, I highly recommend it. In addition, I encourage you to look closely at the articles, "LeaderShift," "A Culture of Leadership" and "Inspiring a Shared Vision," especially if your coworkers' styles differ from your own. The information in these articles will provide insight on how you can fully leverage your existing team and maximize your team's leadership capabilities. I also encourage you to attend an upcoming Leadership Institute to discover a deeper understanding of different leadership styles.

As if that isn't enough information about leadership, this issue has two excellent articles from our top Illinois ASBO leaders. Ethical leadership is key to our roles as CSBOs and I cannot think of anyone better than Dr. Jacoby to write an article for us on this topic and remind us of the importance of being ethical leaders. Sue Bertrand's article will assist you with understanding how your personality type influences your leadership during times of change. As we continue to face unprecedented financial challenges in the State of Illinois, there is no better resource to assist us in our leadership during these turbulent times.

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## Going Beyond the Bottom Line

I have been in the school business profession for over 15 years and my position has changed greatly during my career. When I entered the profession, my primary focus was managing the bottom line for my school district. This issue of **UPDATE** really highlights how the profession (and my role) has changed since then. With three articles on innovation, the message is loud and clear, we cannot just focus on the bottom line anymore. If we want our voice valued with our central office administrators and superintendents, being innovative is more important than ever.

The role of Illinois ASBO has also changed dramatically in the last 15 years. While networking and professional development continue to be our primary focus, Illinois ASBO is now sitting at the legislative table to help guide what school funding will look like in our state. To aid in this effort, we have modified the association's mission statement this year to reflect the fact that Illinois ASBO has taken on an advocacy role. While advocacy cannot be our sole focus, we should be actively engaged in conversations with our legislators about education. There may be times we do not all agree, but the important thing is that we are all engaged in the conversation.

## **SIMPLY SAYING**

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If we want our voice valued with our central office administrators and superintendents, being innovative is more important than ever.

While writing my last article as your Illinois ASBO president, I want to take a moment to reflect on what an honor and privilege it has been to serve you in this capacity. As we work through these turbulent financial times, the task of educating over two million students in Illinois seems daunting. However, I cherish being a school business official. I am so very proud to be a part of this profession along with so many dedicated school business officials and others who assist us in this enormous task.

I will hand over the presidential reigns to Jennifer Hermes on July 1, 2016. I know she will be an excellent leader of our association. For those that have previously served on the Illinois ASBO Board of Directors, thank you so much

for all you have done to make me proud to be a part of this wonderful organization. For those that are currently serving on the Board, thank you for your support this year. If you are currently involved in another capacity, thank you for your time and service. For the Illinois ASBO staff, thank you for all you do to keep our association running smoothly. We are a great organization because of our collective work. My thanks to everyone for your support this year and your work in making Illinois ASBO the best professional organization out there!



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