



Indiana Professional Educators, Inc.

Professional Viewpoint

Educators By Calling, Professionals By Choice

Celebrating over 30 Years
Serving Indiana's
Independent Teachers.

Charter Schools Are Taking Off In Indiana

Charter schools are sponsored by state approved organizations and operate as independent entities. In Indiana, Ball State University and the Mayor of Indianapolis are two of the larger sponsors of charter schools. There are other supporting foundations which include, but are not limited to: The Walton Family Foundation and the Charter School Growth Fund, which is the nation's leading supporter of groups wanting to scale up a charter school.



Charter schools were developed so that they could combine the strongest characteristics of public and private education. These schools are given a certain level of autonomy and "freedom" from certain local and state regulations. However, they must still meet certain criteria set forth by the state. If they do not meet the criteria then they may not be renewed and shut down by the state.

In a charter school environment, there is a smaller class setting and more flexibility in the rules and regulations, in turn they provide more individualized attention. Because of this flexibility it offers the teachers a greater opportunity for professional growth by holding them more accountable through performance incentives. The teachers are allowed to develop their own curriculum and set their

own programs. All of this is done with the oversight of an approved school board and the sponsor for the school. The parents are also more involved and have a significant role in the decision-making that takes place within the schools.

Charter schools are growing in Indiana. Several members, with Indiana Professional Educators, have switched from a publicly operated school to that of a charter school. Charter schools do not charge a tuition, however the schools will receive some funding from the state based on enrollment and attendance. All charter schools must admit any student who applies, unless the classroom capacity has been met. Then, there is a waiting list created and a public lottery system is developed for the next school year. Charter schools must be non-sectarian and follow all state and federal educational, health and safety regulations set forth in each state.

Indiana is approaching 50 charter schools. Currently, there are about 40 schools in operation with nine (9) approved to open in 2008 and 2009. "Mayor Ballard believes that charter schools are good for the community and he fully supports Indiana's charter schools. Ballard stated that he does have high standards and expects charter schools to perform."

Membership Continues To Grow With The Support Of All Our Members!

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL
Have you renewed for
2008-09 yet?



www.ipeteachers.org

POSITION STATEMENT ON SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

The INDIANA PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS, INC. believes that the practice of excluding particular teachers from being considered for appointment to various school committees because they are not members of an exclusive representative organization is an egregious case of discrimination.

Furthermore, the practice of limiting school committee appointments to members of the teachers' union is a form of patronage designed to empower union officials to reward close allies and compliant teachers while punishing non-members.

Furthermore, the practice of exclusion is designed to intimidate independent teachers into joining the teachers' union so that they can be eligible to participate in school activities. All teachers should have the right to be considered to participate in school activities.

Furthermore, eligibility for appointments to school committees should be open to all teachers regardless of their professional affiliations. Particular skill sets or experience relevant to a particular committee's purpose are valid items in consider-

ing appointments and should factor equally for all teachers in a school.

Furthermore, to exclude independent teachers from school committee membership unnecessarily limits the scope of input and opinions that a diverse set of teachers could bring to a discussion.

Furthermore, the practice of exclusion creates an atmosphere of conflict in discussions, planning and other activities for school-wide improvement efforts. Such activities should involve as broad a section of willing teacher participants as possible and practical.

Furthermore, administrators ignore the best interests of their schools, students and the entire teaching staff when they concede to teacher union control to discriminate against independent teachers.

Furthermore, involvement in school committee activities is becoming part of the teacher evaluation process; therefore, to exclude or deny independent teachers the opportunity to participate is patently unfair. It could have an impact on a teacher's career.

Furthermore, the practice of exclusion is not consistent with the protections provided to teachers from compulsory unionism embodied in Indiana law.

Furthermore, matters distinctly in the area of school business should not be part of the exclusive representative's powers under the state's collective bargaining law. School committees are charged with doing school business, not private or union business.

Furthermore, school committees exist to do work for the school, for students, for parents, for the community and for the taxpayers. To exclude independent teachers is to violate the trust of parents and the community and use tax dollars to promote union controls.

For these and other reasons, the INDIANA PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS, INC. strongly opposes all practices designed to exclude independent teachers from equal access to participate in school committees through appointments and related activities.

Approved by the IPE Board of Directors on December 3, 2005

“School Discipline Place To Protect Teachers”

On August 11, 2008 the governor announced the intention to get legal protection for those teachers and other school staff, “who act in good faith to maintain discipline and order in their classrooms.”

Mitch Daniels was quoted as saying, “students can't learn and teachers can't teach in classrooms where kids are disruptive. Some teachers are afraid to restore order when needed because they fear legal harassment. It's unacceptable that a teacher would have that hesitation.”

In 2009, the Indiana General Assembly is to be asked to pass a law granting legal im-

munity to those teachers who “act in good faith to preserve order in their classroom or other school settings.” Many teachers are concerned about taking action in any situation for the fear of a law suit. The governor stated, “In school today, teachers are protected from litigation when they hand out medication, but there are no protections for them when they try to prevent disruptive students from disturbing others who are trying to learn.”

Other states have already enacted such laws, which are more protective of teachers, than the current Indiana laws. Many of these other states' laws are being researched to serve as possible models for Indiana.



FORCED UNIONISM

“Indiana Teachers Sue Union’s Investment Program”

Forced unionism allows the teacher union officials to get an increasingly tighter grip on the American Education System/ Al Shanker, former president of the AFT (American Federation of Teachers) was quoted as saying, “when schoolchildren start paying union dues, that’s when I’ll start representing the interests of schoolchildren.” The children are what makes teachers necessary. Still yet, there are so many teachers that are not happy with what the union claims to be and what they claim to have, “teacher representation.” Within the United States, 1.3 million teachers are forced to pay union dues as an aspect of their employment. Dues, across the nation, are typically between \$700 and \$1,000 for a full-time teacher each year. When the union becomes the “exclusive representative.” To negotiate wages and work rules, it becomes illegal for teachers to have direct bargaining relation-

ships with their employers.

The National Right To Work Legal Defense Foundation has been providing free legal aid to thousands of teachers who are objecting to these compulsory fees funding the political agenda of the union bosses.

A Supreme Court ruling established that, teachers can be forced to pay some union dues, but they cannot be forced to fund non-bargaining activities of the union, like politics. However, the unions make it extremely difficult for teachers to exercise all of their rights. Any teacher has the right of affiliation. Our teachers deserve so much better than to be forced, as a condition of employment none-the-less, to support the unions, if they do not agree with their activities. “No teacher should be forced to join or pay money to a union just to teacher our children.” Cite: Mark Mix, NRTW

Northern Indiana Teachers have filed suit against ISTA and MetLife. The claim is that these organizations, “used misrepresentation to sell securities to ISTA members.” According to the plaintiffs, “Metlife and Uniserv directors are accused of selling teachers the Metlife plan by allowing them to believe that the cost of investing in Metlife was less than the cost associated with some other plans.” Cite: Education Intelligence Agency

This lawsuit alleges the defendants were involved in, “criminal racketeering.” According to the News-Dispatch, out of Michigan City, Indiana, “paragraph 151 of the suit accuses the defendants of having committed corrupt business influence, which is a class C felony, according to Indiana Law, and have further violated (the U.S. Code) by their actions and omissions as described in the suit.”

At this time, this suit is a civil matter, not a criminal matter. It has been stated that, “the process and procedure in which ISTA Financial Services and MetLife sold such securities and other investment options to the public educators was in violation of both Federal and State Law, including the Exchange Act and the Indiana Consumer Deceptive Practices Act.”

Educators Make A Difference

Not many people contact their legislators, even though what happens at the Statehouse can have a major impact on their lives and our state’s future. Often teachers believe legislators are too busy or not interested in reading their constituent mail or answering phone calls. Many people think that legislators don’t care what they think or question whether they can persuade a lawmaker on an important issue. These views couldn’t be further from the truth. IN most cases, legislators

want to hear from constituents, value their opinions much more than professional lobbyists and rely heavily on advice from concerned and involved citizens.

By getting involved in communication with state lawmakers, individuals and groups of concerned teachers can have real clout at the Statehouse.

Remember, once again during the 2009 legislative session, IPE will lobby for the Teacher Committee Bill. This bill is headed by Senator Kenley

and Senator Lubbers. IPE had many testimonials already, from teachers who have been denied the right to sit on committees because they did not belong to the union. Please continue to send in these testimonials either by mail or e-mail so that we may take them to the Statehouse during the next session! Your voice needs to be heard, we cannot take your story to the lawmakers unless you let us!



The Professional Viewpoint is published periodically by the Indiana Professional Educators, Inc. as information for members. Views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Indiana Professional Educators, Inc. Members are welcome to submit articles or news items for publication consideration.

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IPE Is Dedicated To:

- Maintaining the right of Indiana's children to an uninterrupted education;
- Ensuring the right of Indiana's educators to choose their professional affiliations;
- Protecting Indiana's citizens' rights to control public schools through duly-elected officials.

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In The Spotlight

It is with great sadness that IPE is saying farewell to a wonderful woman. Norma Bengé, who was instrumental in assisting Jane Ping with the start-up of IPE, is finally starting her retirement. Norma has been a board member for over 30 years and was always Jane's "right-hand woman." Norma has been retired, from teaching, for some time. However, due to circumstances, she has never really been able to enjoy its benefits.

Now, is her time to shine. While we will GREATLY miss her smiling face and her wonderful ideas and support, we wish her the very best as she ventures off to Florida. Although she may be gone she will never be forgotten. Thank you for a great 32 years!!!!!! We wish you the very best!

An IPE Member was honored and we would like to let everyone know: "Peifer Elementary School fourth grade teacher Tina Garcia was named the Wal-Mart teacher of the year Monday during a surprise award ceremony at the school."



*Let
Us
Know!*

Think about another IPE member (or yourself), that you know, and send in an article about the good things that they have done and/or are currently doing. We would love to include members in the Viewpoint for all of the positive things that they bring to the children of Indiana. An article could also be sent in regarding the positive things happening in your school or in your school district. These ideas could help other teachers and principals in different areas to think of doing things with a different approach. It is always nice to know what has worked in other areas to see if it can be implemented in your area as a new concept. Send in an article today through e-mail or first-class mail.

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