

## Porter, House cook choice stakes

*Democrats send tax credit, virtual schools to slaughterhouse*

Legislation sought in part by the Indiana State Teachers Association to compel school districts to exhaust certain cost-savings options prior to resorting to education employee layoffs passes out of the House . . . but not before the bill's author, House Education Committee Chair Greg Porter (D) of Indianapolis, weighed it down with multiple anti-school choice provisions.

The bill as amended called for delaying the implementation of the school scholarship income tax credit and the virtual charter school - two programs enacted in last year's special session budget bill. Rep. Porter explained in committee that the State ought not create these new programs at the same time that schools have been told to cut \$297 million from their budgets.

All education programs need to share in the pain, explained Rep. Porter.

The Education Committee chair also inserted language to prohibit for-profit entities from managing charter schools, restrict membership on charter school boards of directors, and require a local petition drive or referendum to occur prior to the opening of any new charter schools. While ISTA took credit for seeking to postpone the two choice programs, the teachers' union disavowed responsibility for these three charter school changes.

Testifying first against the bill was Indiana Department of Education Legislative Liaison Emily Shelman. She contended that the petition/referendum language would have the effect of creating a cap on the number of charters in the State, which would put Indiana in misalignment with the policies of the President. She also explained that DOE opposed revocation of state appropriations for ACT/SAT test preparation (\$500,000/year) and PSAT testing (\$717,449/year) which would have been redirected toward a new fund to be created for the purpose of supporting school instructional services. The tests are important tools for postsecondary preparation, Shelman told the panel. Finally, she said DOE did not support a "shall" provision in the bill that called on school districts to reduce expenditures for non-essential testing by suspending K-2 diagnostic tests, Grade 3-8 Acuity testing, Core 40 end-of-course assessments, and the ISTEP social studies exam. Many teachers would likely dispute the notion that these assessment instruments are "non-essential," Shelman asserted.

Derek Redelman, vice president of education and workforce development for the Indiana Chamber of Commerce, testified next against the bill. Virtual charter schools receive only 80% of the average statewide per-pupil amount, "so why it's presented as a savings, I don't know," said Redelman. The prohibition on for-profit entities managing charter schools would eliminate a number of very successful charters, including the Andrew J. Brown Academy in Indianapolis, the Charter School of the Dunes in Gary, and the charter sponsored by M.S.D. of Perry Township through Edison Learning. He suggested that the diagnostic testing that would be wiped out by the bill has been in high demand from teachers for years. If teacher jobs are in jeopardy across the state, it's because bargaining units have refused to come back to the table and negotiate a salary freeze, and if the goal is to save jobs, "This bill doesn't get you there, and it rolls back several things that would help you," concluded Redelman.

*For more, please see the following page . . .*

## Where bonds were reinforced

*Purdue seeks expanded debt powers*

In 2007, the legislature afforded Purdue University special permission to issue up to \$60 million in bonds for repair and renovation projects - the first time an educational institution was granted permission to bond for R&R. Purdue now seeks new singular bonding authority.

HB 1297 would allow Purdue to issue bonds without prior General Assembly approval as long as the bonds were not subject to a fee replacement appropriation. For example, last year the legislature approved construction of a new Student Fitness Center on the West Lafayette campus. Purdue will issue the bonds and pay back the debt using revenue from a \$250 per year student fee. "We don't see why that should have to go through the General Assembly," said Jim Almond, vice president of business services at Purdue, since the State does not allocate the debt service payments.

A provision in HB 1267 applicable to all institutions would allow them to bypass State Budget Committee approval when refunding an outstanding student fee bond if it would result in a net savings to the school. Schools want to respond quickly to favorable market refinancing opportunities, but have been stymied because BudComm does not convene when the legislature is in session. "We could save \$600,000 to \$800,000 by moving forward with refinancing more quickly," said Kevin Green, director of state relations for Purdue.

On both changes - the Purdue specific language and refinancing changes - oversight would continue to be provided from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, State Budget Agency, Governor's Office, and Indiana Finance Authority.

Rep. Jeff Espich (R) of Unionville, chair of the State Budget Committee, voted against the bill. "It's alright if they have a little adult supervision," he said, reminding colleagues of the role the budget panel played last Summer in strong-arming Purdue into downsizing its tuition and fee hike. Indiana University was invited to join the Purdue request, but opted for a wait and see approach, said the bill's author, Rep. Sheila Klinker (D) of Lafayette.

The petition/referendum language on charters would require 51% of the parents of students enrolled in the school corporation where the charter would be located to express support for any new charter before it could open.

Toby McClamroch, managing partner of Bingham • McHale, an Indianapolis law firm that has supported the charter school movement in Indiana for years and helped craft the 2001 charter law, testified that the 51% standard would serve to be an almost insurmountable barrier for charter authorizers to overcome. Think about it, said McClamroch. The language doesn't require 51% of voters to approve the charter, but 51% of parents with children in the school district where the charter would locate. "The effect is a *de facto* 'There will be no more charter schools,'" claimed McClamroch.

John Eccelsor, representing the Indiana Non-Public Schools Association, testified in support of the income tax credit accorded to donations to private school scholarship-granting organizations, explaining that if the tax credit serves to entice students to leave the public school system and enroll in a private school, the result will be a savings to the State. "If we want to save money, we can remove the (\$2.5 million/year) cap on the tax credit to add more students," he offered.

Also in opposition was Monique Christensen, president of the Indiana Families for Public Virtual Schools, who sought to put a human face on the virtual pilot program. The 126 students who are currently enrolled in the virtual charter school include a homebound student with Cystic Fibrosis, a fourth-grader with autism, and an Olympic team-hopeful diver. "There's no good reason to threaten these children with the closure of their school," she said.

Nate Schnellenberger, president of the Indiana State Teachers Association and a science teacher for 34 years, then rose to testify in support. The bill offers "real solutions to deal with real problems while protecting instructional programs," the ISTA president opined.

He addressed the five solutions to preserving teacher jobs presented in the bill. First, by the ISTA's own count, 155 school corporations are sitting on cash balances totaling \$243 million, and about two-thirds of districts have about \$100 million in Rainy Day reserves. Schools should spend down these monies prior to laying off staff, he contended. Additionally, some \$3.9 billion of the \$6.5 billion statewide school spend falls in the categories of overhead and non-instructional expenses, and he believes that schools should be required to reduce spending in those categories by at least five percent. Next, as Schnellenberger sees it, schools should be able to spend up to five percent of capital projects fund dollars on general fund expenses. Finally, he argues that schools should reduce their spending on nonessential testing. Notably, the bill did not seek to eliminate the current appropriation of \$953,284 for Advanced Placement testing.

The bill ultimately passed out of the House Committee on Education by a party-line vote of 6-5.

A grassroots missive distributed to parents by the Indiana Families for Public Virtual Schools advised that "the Indiana House of Representatives is poised to consider a dramatic anti-school choice bill to postpone the new Scholarship Tax Credit, effectively halt any new charter schools and shelve the new virtual education pilot program. Thousands of Indiana families stand to lose educational options if the current HB 1367 passes." The message singled out Rep. Porter for inserting the language in the bill "without prior public notice" and said the bill was "part of a controversial package advanced by teacher union lobbyists to access more state and local school funding."

ISTA has said it sought responsibility for suspending the tax credit and virtual pilot, but distanced itself from the other anti-charter school measures in the bill as it left committee.

Indiana Families for Public Virtual Schools labeled the bill as an attempt "to use the state's budget crisis as pretext to deny parents school choices and boost spending for their supporters. They've got it all backwards: The Scholarship Tax Credit actually saves money for the state. Lawmakers could save millions more by increasing the program, not postponing it! Charter schools today receive less funding than other public schools, once again saving money for the state. Virtual education pilot program students are funded at 20% less than in other public school settings."

On February 1, the full House considered HB 1367 on Second Reading, and approved two amendments from Rep. Porter. The first, identified as Amendment #14, provided school corporations with limited flexibility to transfer property tax money between the various local silos, and was approved with little opposition.

The second amendment from the majority eliminated some but not all of the contentious anti-choice measures. The changes deleted the reference to having 51% of parents in a district approve any new charters via petition or referendum, removed the prohibition on private management companies operating charters, and wiped out the prohibition against charter school board members serving on more than one board. "There was an incident in regards to Fort Wayne and their board members serving on a board in Texas, and it became really a pretty sticky situation," Rep. Porter told his colleagues, explaining the impetus for the original language. That amendment was also approved.

Next, House Republican Leader Brian Bosma (R) of Indianapolis introduced an amendment to reinstate the income tax credit for persons who donate money to a private school scholarship-granting organization. "To say we can't afford it for kids who need it the most I think is a tremendous step backward," explained Rep. Bosma.

Rep. Jeff Espich (R) of Unionville took to the podium to offer a personal and philosophical defense of private schools. "I went to a public school," he confessed. "My wife is a public school teacher. My daughter is a public school teacher. I'm a public school advocate," he stated.

“On the other hand,” the State Budget Committee chair continued, “I understand that private schools provide alternatives, competition, a different way of doing business. I will tell you, maybe I’m wrong, that public school children benefit from having private school families sending their kids to an alternative form of education. If we put those 100,000 children in public schools, it would cost us a billion dollars more. Thank God private schools are there to offer a choice, an alternative view on how education should be completed. They both have a role.”

Rep. Espich concluded by imploring his colleagues from both sides of the aisle, “Let’s all stop trying to beat up on who we think is the villain on the other side. First of all, let’s help kids. The scholarship helps some of the neediest kids in our society.”

House Committee on Ways and Means Chair Bill Crawford (D) of Indianapolis then rose to challenge the assertion from Republicans that the income tax credit would help the neediest of students. The qualification for eligibility to receive a private school scholarship would be 200% of the free and reduced price lunch threshold, he said, which equates to \$78,440 for a family of four. Rep. Crawford then contended that there are no rules on the oversight of the tax credit or the virtual schools, and that Indiana is the only state that employs this method of providing a private school tax credit – two statements that Republicans pounced on.

Rep. Bob Behning (R) of Indianapolis clarified that rules on the education tax credit have been written by the Department of Revenue in assistance with the Department of Education. Rep. Behning admitted that the upper boundary to qualify for a scholarship rests at 200% of the amount required for students to qualify for free and reduced lunch. He also went on to reference several additional eligibility qualifiers – although we believe he was mistakenly referring to an earlier version of last year’s language and not to the final language that found its way into the enacted special session budget.

We point out the distinction because it’s crucial to the debate over whether the tax credit will save money – when tax credits go to students already in a private school, which the enacted language does not expressly prohibit, then the argument that the credit saves money falls flat. At the same time, the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust, the only scholarship granting organization in the state certified thus far under the law, limits its scholarships to children who: (a) live in Marion County; and, (b) are transferring from a public school or are entering Kindergarten for the first time.

Rep. Bosma concluded debate on the amendment by saying that “It was stated no other state has this program. You guys have to get around more. A dozen states have education tax credit programs in one form or another.” He added, “The people we proposed to help are those who cannot afford school choice,” and this provides an opportunity and an option for families and children “to have a little hope.”

Rep. Bosma’s amendment was defeated on a party-line vote.

Next, Rep. Behning rose to offer an amendment that would preserve the virtual charter school pilot program.

“Let me tell you about the virtuals,” began Rep. Behning. He went on to detail that the pilot school was established for the first time by HEA 1001-ss, and the language can be found on page 375 of the budget. The school has enrolled 106 students in the first year, and the requirements provide that the program be focused on children with medical disabilities or unusual circumstances and that 75% of students must have been enrolled in the public schools during the previous year. “It meets very particular needs,” said Rep. Behning. Because each student in the virtual school receives 80% of the statewide average tuition support, “There’s no question we’re saving state money.” The school has enrolled students from 56 school corporations in 32 counties.

Rep. Porter countered that the State can’t afford the school at this time, and the amendment was also defeated. Of the 11 amendments to the bill filed by House Republicans, none were approved.

On February 2, the bill came up for a Third Reading vote in the House, where it provoked some unusually passionate testimony on both sides of the aisle.

Republican Leader Bosma led off the opposition by pledging that his caucus would work with Democrats to create flexibility for moving around siloed property tax funds.

But “let me tell you what I don’t like about this bill,” Rep. Bosma continued. “My mom, who was a product of the Depression, she used to say something was penny-wise and pound-foolish.” And “with respect to the majority’s jihad” to do away with the education tax credit and virtual pilot, “it is penny-wise and pound-foolish.” He lamented the “many misstatements at the microphone yesterday.” Rules for the income tax credit were adopted by the State in December, and “there is one qualified organization in the State, the CHOICE Charitable Trust,” which allows “the poorest of families” to take advantage of private school options. The average income of a family that receives a scholarship from the CHOICE Trust is \$27,000, he said, and if a public school student takes that scholarship to attend a private school, the state saves money because “we no longer pay for that student as a public school student. I don’t know why we don’t get that math.” The second reason the bill is “penny-wise and pound-foolish” is that it discourages testing that can help objectively identify student academic deficiencies.

Furthermore, Rep. Bosma cited the Legislative Services Agency analysis that 85% of the fiscal flexibility outlined in the bill could already be accomplished. That being the case, what then is the true purpose of this bill?, the Republican Leader then asked. “The original bill was so no one in the State can have a public school charter, which was resolved yesterday. It was to take away choice for the poorest children of the State, and to squelch 126 families that have chosen a virtual school option. I can’t vote for that,” he lamented to his colleagues on the House floor.

Rep. Crawford rose next, and he began by challenging the assertion that Democrats are anti-options.

“Rep. Bosma just referenced the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust. I believe that I am the only member of this body that was formerly a board member,” Rep. Crawford reminded his fellow representatives. He explained that, “I used to go out to Golden Rule [Insurance] to develop and support their initiative to get more students enrolled in private education. In addition, I am a product of a private school. For 8 years I went to St. Richards,” a Catholic school located only a few blocks from the State House. “So I don’t have a ‘jihad’ against private education. When I went to high school, for my freshman year, I was enrolled at Cathedral High School.” He continued, “I’m not engaged in any ‘jihad.’ I am practical and supportive of education generally. And the majority of my constituents attend public schools.” He said he voluntarily left the CHOICE Trust board of directors “because they began to engage in educational hegemony” and began “to demonize the public education system.” But “it does not matter to me where a child is educated. The fact of the matter is they need to be educated. We all benefit from an educated citizenry. Education is the cornerstone of a free society, and I recognize and support that,” concluded Rep. Crawford.

The Ways and Means chair said that he is disappointed but pragmatic that State funding for education has been cut, but doesn’t understand why “we instituted two new programs that spent money.” Finally, he said, “You don’t get education on the cheap, and we need to stop pushing for education on the cheap. We need to stand up and say – as the bumper stickers I used to read said – ‘If you think education is expensive, try ignorance.’”

Rep. Mike Murphy (R) of Indianapolis rose to talk about the importance of the state subsidy for PSAT tests, which the bill would seek to eradicate. High school students take the test annually to compete for national merit scholar status, which can lead to significant postsecondary scholarships.

Finally, Rep. Vernon Smith (D) of Gary, a former public school principal, took to the podium to share his thoughts. “For two days we’ve been tossing around the term, ‘the poorest of the poor.’ I can tell you that I know what is poor,” he said. “Many of you may not relate to the fact that many times your lunch was a mayonnaise sandwich, or a syrup sandwich, or a catsup sandwich. If you were blessed, you could buy bologna, three pounds for a dollar, and then everyday you had fried bologna, baked in the oven bologna, or you had it grated up and mayonnaise put in it to try and give it a different appearance. Let me tell you about being poor, when you have three or four boys sleeping in the same bed,” or “when your in-laws came, or your mother – a minister – took in stray kids, and you were displaced from your bed, to your own personal cot on the floor in the Winter. Being poor is getting clothes only at the beginning of the school year, and maybe Easter, and the rest of your clothes are hand-me-downs from neighbors or from older siblings.”

“What we have begun to do is to make some of our urban schools, our traditional public schools, impoverished,” said Rep. Smith. “You say \$2.5 million makes no difference when we look at the total budget, but look at what you have been doing to the corporations I represent,” he said, mentioning Lake Ridge, River Forest, Lake Station, and Gary. “Look at what you have been doing: you have been taking money away from them every year.” The education professor at Indiana University Northwest added, “I went to see the virtual school program. I was impressed, terribly impressed. I would like to have the dollars to make it a supplemental program in our school corporations.” But he cautioned that the virtual program has limits. “I don’t think any of those programs can ever supplant the regular program. That’s because of the human factor. You need a teacher there to make a difference.” He surmised that “They might be a good supplemental program, but they should not replace contact with human beings who are caring, motivational, committed.”

Rep. Smith then circled back to the beginning of his comments. “When you make \$70,000, you are not ‘poor’ in the ‘hood. You are rich.” And he concluded, “We ought to stop spreading money out, and make sure we’re doing what we need to do for the basic foundation for our children.”

With that, the bill passed out of the Democratic-controlled House by a party-line vote of 51 to 48, and led to a rare burst of applause in the House chamber. The bill will be carried in the Senate by Senate Committee on Appropriations Chair Luke Kenley (R) of Noblesville. The Indiana Department of Education did not consult Sen. Kenley up front on its third-grade retention bill, which created some friction with the senator, and the supporters of HB 1367 seem to have learned from that misstep. But even though they’re including Sen. Kenley in the discussion early on, that doesn’t necessarily suggest that HB 1367 will find an easy path through the Senate Appropriations Committee.

There are lots of moving parts here, and the Republican-controlled Senate will be putting its own stamp on the legislation.

Could this bill morph into a vehicle for moving dollars between siloed property tax funds? Sen. Gary “Doc” Dillon (R) of Columbia City observes that such flexibility “will put tremendous pressure on schools to tap into other funds. Some of them are very leery. If you take money out of the capital projects and build it into the general fund budget, you’re going to have a cliff down the line. I don’t see any new money coming in to repair that cliff.”

## IN Elementary and Secondary Ed

### *IN General . . .*

- In late October, the Indiana Department of Education communicated that the balance of state funding in the 2009-10 Professional Development Grant account had been frozen, pending a review of declining state revenues.

□ Then in early January, the State Budget Agency informed school corporations that the deepening revenue shortfalls would require that all remaining professional development funds be re-allocated to the state General Fund. No further payments to schools during the 2009 - 10 academic year grant cycle will be distributed, and the initial payment of \$1,250 will be the only funding that buildings will receive this year. No determination has been made regarding the 2010 - 11 funding.

- The U.S. Department of Education won't publicly reveal the names of the 58 judges selected to review the Race to the Top applications, but it does disclose that seven of the judges (12%) hail from the Midwest.

- A few months ago we told you that the State Board of Education had dispatched teams to 23 schools in 10 school corporations that had persistently not met the school improvement or performance standards of Public Law 221. Expect to soon hear that memorandums are being negotiated with each school (loosely based on Title I requirements) that could call for replacing the school leaders and all instructional staff.

- The Indiana Department of Education hosted a science summit on February 3 at the Eli Lilly and Company corporate headquarters.

- U.S. Sen. **Dick Lugar** (R) and Superintendent of Public Instruction **Tony Bennett** (R) are asking for organizations to sponsor the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in the 25 Indiana Counties where it currently does not operate. SFSP feeds low-income children in the Summer months when school is not in session.

- The Mind Trust, the Indianapolis-based nonprofit entity supporting education innovation and entrepreneurship, will immediately begin accepting applications for its Education Entrepreneur Fellowship on a rolling basis. The Mind Trust expects to award up to three Fellowships in 2010.

- The National Council on Teacher Quality assigns Indiana a "D" in its 2009 report.

***IN Administration . . .***

- The Indianapolis Public Schools grants a roughly three percent raise for Superintendent **Eugene White**, in addition to salary increases for four other administrators, even as the district grapples with a \$25 million budget deficit. Dr. White had gone three years without a raise, but the salary increments received considerable negative media attention locally.

- The Fort Wayne Community Schools mixes up its administrative assignments, shifting 21 administrators to different buildings. Next up: employees at 11 schools deemed for turnaround assistance will have to reapply for their jobs. "This is the most comprehensive, complicated, risky thing we've ever done in this district," Superintendent **Wendy Robinson** said, reports the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*.

***IN Budgets . . .***

- The **Wa-Nee Community Schools** will cut one business teacher. The district also enters into an energy savings contract and hires a 20-hour per week "energy specialist" to help reduce utility bills.

- *The Goshen News* reports that Performance Services, an Indiana based Design-Build engineering and construction company specializing in eco-friendly, energy saving HVAC systems for K-12 and business, has expressed interest in constructing a "wind farm" in southern Indiana and allowing school districts to buy-in for their energy needs, regardless of where they are located in the state.

- The **Center Grove Community School Corporation** ponders a lengthy list of potential budget savings and revenue sources including charging a fee for participation in athletics and eliminating 39 teaching positions. The district has decided to postpone its adoption of a New Tech High School, and may also close an elementary school.

- The **Elkhart Community Schools** board votes to approve eight recommendations to protect its budget, including a hiring freeze, shifting all utility expenses to the Capital Projects Fund, "eliminate partnership agreements with other agencies," eliminate all equipment and vehicle purchases from the general fund, and reducing Summer School. Board members' also voted to reduce their own compensation by five percent, and ordered the superintendent to reopen negotiations with all employee groups.

- **WRTV-TV 6News** in Indianapolis reports that, "Some are questioning why Lawrence Township school officials considered cutting teachers and freezing salaries before getting rid of an expensive perk for administrators. Top managers within the district pay \$1 a year for health insurance, costing the school system more than \$200,000 annually .... But when board members began considering where to make \$8 million in cuts to balance the budget, the perk was not included in the list of possible places to trim."

- The **Crown Point Community School Corporation** finalizes a separation agreement with the Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative. The decision to leave the co-op had been announced more than one year ago.

- The **New Prairie United School Corporation** board votes to reduce hours for library aides and secretarial staff and will begin to pay for trash removal out of its capital projects fund. Superintendent **Philip Bender** also calls on all employees to take a voluntary one percent pay cut, and says the district could save an additional \$150,000 on substitute teachers if employees improved their attendance rates.

- The **South Bend Community School Corporation** board freezes all administrative salaries, eliminates automatic step increases for administrators, and also informs seven administrators that their contracts won't be renewed at the end of the year.

- Look for the Lafayette School Corporation to excise some extracurricular Summer sports, including Summer baseball, softball, and gymnastics for junior high students. LSC will also likely trim the ranks of its assistant coaching staff for the coming school year.

- Manchester Community Schools plans to lay off 17 employees by the end of the month and cut the hours of seven more by as much as 25% per day.

- The Fairfield Community School District board suggests that students might have to pay a fee in the future to participate in athletics or extracurriculars.

### *IN Charters . . .*

- A poll conducted on behalf of the Indiana Public Charter Schools Association finds 82% of Hoosier respondents favored more options within the public school system, and 54% of respondents strongly favored more options. The survey of 501 registered Indiana voters was conducted in January by the D.C.-based Glover Park Group.

- The survey shows that 45% of respondents were familiar with the concept of charter schools. The 2008 Center for Evaluation and Education Policy Public Opinion Survey on K-12 in Indiana found that only 38% of its respondents were somewhat or very familiar with charter schools.

- More than 4,000 children are on charter school waiting lists statewide, according to the Indiana Public Charter Schools Association.

- Joanna Blacketer has been elected to the 2010 - 11 Board of Directors of the Indiana Public Charter Schools Association. She serves as a gubernatorial appointee to the Indiana State Board of Education.

- Also joining the Board will be Theresa J. Wright, MD, Senior Director-Medical for Eli Lilly & Company in Indianapolis. She is the president of the board of directors of the Indiana Life Sciences Academy charter school.

- Ball State University imposes a series of sanctions on the Imagine Schools in Fort Wayne, after an investigation by the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette* revealed weak-to-nonexistent local oversight of three charter schools.

- Ball State has ordered the Imagine Schools to restructure the boards for its three Fort Wayne charters so that no member serves on more than one board, and calls on Imagine to sever ties with two charter schools in Texas that Imagine had allegedly provided oversight of from Fort Wayne. The corrective action required by Ball State officials also directs Imagine to begin complying with the Indiana Open Door Law, and requires the boards to schedule regular work sessions so trustees can read and review important documents.

- The *JG* reports that concerns raised by Ball State in a letter detailing the sanctions include: several board members had not even read the charter, by-laws, or contract with Imagine Schools; weren't clear who the board's attorney is; and could not say whether the board had officers (with one member saying she "thought she was the secretary of the board but was not certain"). Board members are also ordered to complete mandatory training by July 1.

- The Lakeside Charter Academy proposed for East Chicago that would be managed by the National Heritage Academies, which operates 61 schools across the nation including one in Gary and one in Indianapolis, will not now open until at least Fall 2011, a decision that organizers say they made reluctantly after finding environmental contamination at the proposed site for the school.

- Rock Creek Christian Academy in Sellersburg will seek to shed its religious affiliations and convert to charter school status this Fall.

### *IN Non-Public Schools . . .*

- The University of Notre Dame designates three Tucson, Arizona, parish Catholic schools as the nation's first Notre Dame ACE Academy (NDAA) schools - a model that Notre Dame hopes to replicate nationwide.

- Keystone Schools, a Christian school in Fort Wayne (formerly Fort Wayne Christian School) that enrolls some 180 students, has not paid its 23 teachers for January, and barring an imminent infusion of more than \$500,000 (which would reportedly still leave it with \$1.2 million annual shortfall), the school appears likely to close before the end of the year. The founder has traditionally funded about one-half of the budget, but is apparently no longer providing that money.

- Trinity Lutheran School in Darmstadt, which has operated in northern Vanderburgh County since 1853, had considered closing due to declining enrolment, but church officials decide to retain its pre-school through fourth grade curriculum, while eliminating fifth- through eighth grade classes next year.

### *IN Contracts . . .*

- Teachers in the Peru Community School Corporation will receive a 1.2% salary increase over two years under a new salary schedule. The increase will go into effect retroactively on paychecks from September through January, but otherwise, the 2009 pay schedule will remain in effect for the rest of calendar year 2010. Beginning in 2011, the pay increase will kick back in.

- Also included in the updated contract: a \$15,000 buy-out for teachers with at least 14 years of classroom experience. The district hopes as many as 20 teachers will take advantage of the incentive by the end of the current academic year, and if not, reductions in force will be made, PCSC officials promise.

- Crown Point Community School Corporation teachers agree to no pay raises for the next two years, although they will still receive a one-time, one percent increase in 2010 and again in 2011.
- Teachers employed by the Union-North United School Corporation in Lakeville will receive no raise in the 2009 - 10 master contract, but will take home a one-time \$250 stipend in May.

### ***IN Curriculum & Programs . . .***

- Indiana University's Advance College Project signs up the Fairfield Community Schools to offer dual credit literature and composition. The district plans to offer the ACP course in tandem with Advanced Placement English - students would register for either the AP or ACP portion, but both would be taught at the same time with essentially the same curriculum.
- Administrators at one Marion County township school felt compelled to convene a January assembly for fifth graders to explain to them that common texting terms and abbreviations and abbreviations were not appropriate to use in written school tests, papers, and other assignments.
- The Seymour Community School Corporation will be offering parents on-line student bus route information and text message alerts about school closings and delays.
- The Kokomo-Center Township Consolidated School Corporation enters into an agreement with The Crossing alternative school to educate high school students identified as at-risk of dropping out. At least 25 Kokomo High School students will likely be asked to enroll in the non-traditional program, which asks that students take lessons via the computer for three hours per day. Outside of the three hour requirement, students are free to leave to fulfill work or parenting obligations. The school also has a Christian element, but The Crossing officials assured the board that the religious theme was lawful since attendance at the school is merely optional.

### ***IN Policy . . .***

- The Indianapolis Public Schools ordered up a two-hour delay for the start of school on the Monday after the Super Bowl, claiming that the last time the Indianapolis Colts played in the game in 2006, one-half of its school bus drivers called in sick the morning after, forcing IPS to call off the entire day. Not so fast, said the Department of Education. DOE advised IPS that the proposed two-hour delay would not comport with state guidelines, which led IPS to announce that the delay would be shortened to one hour, and the day would be extended in the afternoon by 30 minutes.
- Unveiled in Washington, D.C.: a new report from the Indiana University Center for Evaluation and Education Policy finds that achievement gaps among high ability students from different economic, racial, and linguistic backgrounds in the U.S. are large and growing.

□ *Mind the (Other) Gap! The Growing Excellence Gap in K-12 Education* defines an "excellence gap" - the difference in the proportion of students in different demographic groups who score at the advanced level on student achievement tests.

□ Examining NAEP results from 2000 to 2007, the IU report concludes that in both grades four and eight reading and mathematics, the excellence gaps among different racial groups widened. In grade four mathematics, the growth was particularly stark - the percentage of white students scoring at the advanced level increased by five percentage points, while the percentages of black and Hispanic students increased by only one percentage point. Considering socio-economic status, the excellence gap in grade four mathematics again showed the fastest growth. The percentage of students eligible for the federal government's National School Lunch Program free meals (children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level) who scored at the advanced level increased only one percentage point to one percent. The percentage of students not eligible for the program scoring at the advanced level increased five percentage points to nine percent.

### ***IN Construction . . .***

- The Kokomo Center-Township Consolidated School Board rejects all of the bids it received for the second phase of construction of a high school football complex, opting to freeze any further work until the board feels confident in the stability of its capital projects fund. The district says it is closely watching bills in the legislature dealing with the CPF, and that negotiations with (new and old) Chrysler on paying its delinquent property tax bills remain a work in process.
- The Rensselaer Central School Corporation board votes to construct a new \$14 million building for Monnett School.
- HB 1063 would create new energy efficiency standards on the construction of government buildings, including school buildings. A new building of at least 5,000 square feet which costs at least \$500,000 must achieve at least the silver rating under the LEED rating system or the Two Globes rating under the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes rating system.
- The Vigo County School Corporation board will advertise for proposals to replace boilers at the two high schools and for a new guaranteed energy savings contract.
- Hamilton Southeastern Schools officials are telling parents that as many as 50 portable classrooms - double the number currently in use at HSE - will likely have to be deployed throughout the district to accommodate increased enrollment should district voters disapprove a proposed construction referendum scheduled for November.
- The West Lafayette School Corporation receives county approval for its tax referendum question that would allow the district to raise about \$3.5 million annually over the next seven years - if voters approve the measure in May.

### *IN Transition . . .*

- The Governor has been named by U.S. Secretary of Education **Arne Duncan** to his informal Kitchen Cabinet advising the U.S. Department of Education on the reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind).

- Center Grove Community Schools Superintendent **Steve Stephanoff** worked his last day in the district on February 2, six weeks after the school board voted against a contract renewal. A separation agreement calls for continuing to pay Stephanoff the superintendent's \$155,000 salary until June 30.

- The interim leader over the next year will be **Edward Lippe**, a former superintendent from the state of Michigan, who will be paid \$145,000.

- **Lynn A. Sheets** (R) of Liberty, the retiring superintendent of the Union County-College Corner Joint School District, opens a campaign committee for a primary challenge of Rep. **Tom Knollman** (R) of Liberty in HD 55. Sheets also served 17½ years as superintendent of Western Wayne Schools before retiring from that post in 2004.

- **Molly Deuberry**, communications director for the Indiana State Teachers' Retirement Fund, leaves that agency for a communications post with the City of Indianapolis.

### *IN Government . . .*

- Chalk up a political victory for the Save Our Summers crew, as the Senate passes legislation requiring schools to begin the academic year after Labor Day.

- Schools with balanced calendars, year-round calendars, or calendars tied to the same schedule as a local college or university would be exempt from the proposed measure. The bill initially stated that schools needed to end the year by June 10, but an amendment allows local school boards to supersede that uniform ending date. The bill's author, Sen. **Mike Delph** (R) of Carmel, testified that the effort is intended to give families more control over their vacation time, and allow them to enjoy the simple pleasures of the dog days of Summer in late August. Others point to school energy savings and more state tourism spending.

- The 31 - 19 roll call shows 10 Republican senators voting against the plan, including Senate President Pro Tem **David Long** (R) of Fort Wayne, and nine Democrats crossing over in the affirmative. Sen. **Gary "Doc" Dillon** (R) of Columbia City explained his "nay" vote: "For me it boils down to where local control should start, and where state control should stop. That's a philosophical argument. We all draw the line in different places. When you look at polls on how people feel about this, there's a poll every two years on school boards called an election. If this is an issue locals feel strongly about there will be changes in the composition of a school board. That's what the essence of local control is. We're stepping in to a situation here that can be handled at a local level."

- Remember the All Children Matter PAC which burst onto the Hoosier political scene (supporting pro-education voucher candidates) with little fanfare in the 2004 elections, contributing large amounts of late money to Republicans in more than one-dozen legislative races (the year Republicans ended a decade of Democratic House control)? Well, All Children Matter is back, but in a new permutation. Registering this time around is the American Federation of Children PAC, Inc., which bears the same Terre Haute address as All Children Matter . . . and the same address as the law firm of Indiana Republican National Committeeman **James Bopp, Jr.**, the domo behind ACM in 2004. Bopp law firm attorney **Barry Bostrom** lends his e-mail address to the 2010 version, and Michigan's **Betsy DeVos**, wife of former Amway chieftain **Dick DeVos**, reprises her role as chair. Professional political fundraising compliance expert **Lisa Lisker** is treasurer.

- Our sister newsletter, **INDIANA LEGISLATIVE INSIGHT**, also reports on talk suggesting that the Indiana State Teachers Association has diminished political capital to throw around at the State House. If political capital is measured in terms of ISTA organizational leadership change, questions about organizational finance and stability, and the impact of ISTA's actions under former leaders upon local school district finances, that may be true, but rumors of diminished political capital in terms of campaign finance at the state level simply don't hold water. ISTA's statewide Indiana Political Action for Education (I-PACE) Committee reports about \$736,000 on hand at the close of 2009, about \$100,000 more than they had at the end of 2005 (the appropriate year for comparison in the four year election cycle). The next year, 2006, I-PACE spent almost \$1.3 million on assorted races.

- State Superintendent of Public Instruction **Tony Bennett** (R) reports that he raised \$78,303 for his campaign committee during 2009. By comparison, his predecessor in office, Dr. **Suellen Reed** (R), raised \$14,442 during 2005; \$10,843 during 2001; and \$9,396 during 1997 (the first years after her respective elections).

- Indiana has long had a provision in law that prohibits the evaluation of teachers based in whole or in part on ISTEP test scores. The 2009 special session budget tweaked the statutory language in anticipation of the federal Race to the Top competition. The change specified that under the limited circumstance where federal guidelines require it as a condition for receiving federal funds, school test results could be used as a factor but not the sole factor to evaluate educators.

- HB 1134, approved by the House last week, further clarifies the changes made last session. The bill provides that Indiana's testing contractors, CTB-McGraw/Hill and Questar, must certify that the test is valid and reliable according to accepted psychometric standards for the purpose of teacher evaluations. According to the Indiana State Teachers Association, the updated language would make testing companies liable for non-valid measurements leading to teacher discipline or dismissal.

□ The language in the bill seems to zero in on a question that is asked in every profession – is the personnel evaluation system used by management fair?

● HB 1365, authored by House Committee on Education Chair **Greg Porter** (D) of Indianapolis, passes to the Senate by a vote of 77 - 22. The Porter bill provides that students may not be charged tuition and fees for dual credit courses. The burden of who pays the cost of dual credit courses has been a longstanding point of contention between K-12 and higher education. Public schools receive funding for students taking dual credit classes through the school formula, and universities receive funding from enrollment growth and tuition charged to students. Whether the State should pay for the same student twice is an issue that hasn't been addressed. Colleges and universities charge a modest tuition and fees to students for taking these courses, although the cost is substantially below the full-time student rate (Ivy Tech Community College is the only institution that does not charge for dual credit).

□ Last year, the State Board of Education held preliminary discussions about seeking legislation that would eliminate the provision that students seeking a Core 40 Academic Honors diploma take either a dual credit or Advanced Placement course (the discussions had contemplated keeping the AP but not the dual credit proviso). About 32,000 Hoosier students took a dual credit course during 2008, according to the Indiana Concurrent Enrollment Partnership, a working group that continues to meet under the auspices of the Indiana Commission for Higher Education and the Indiana Department of Education. The Partnership avoided addressing the issue of cost in an initial report submitted to the Legislature at the end of 2008.

□ During House floor debate on HB 1365, Rep. **Bob Behning** (R) of Indianapolis explained that Indiana University, Purdue University, Indiana State University, and Ball State University all opposed the legislation because it would prevent them from recovering costs for administering the courses. Currently, the State mandates that students on free or reduced-price lunch may not be charged tuition or fees for dual credit courses, and Rep. Behning explained, "My fear is we could end up eliminating some of the classes for kids on free and reduced lunch if universities decide to withdraw because they can't afford to continue these courses." The State should continue to look for ways to encourage dual credit enrollment but, "I don't believe passing this today will resolve the problem."

● We told you that Sen. **Pat Miller** (R) of Indianapolis had authored legislation on teen suicide prevention in schools. Senators voted to send the topic to the Health Finance Commission for study during the 2010 legislative interim.

● Not passing out of the Senate by the half-time deadline: legislation spurred by a series in the *Indianapolis Star* to facilitate the exchange of information between school districts on employee misconduct. The bill did not come up for Third Reading.

● The Senate approves legislation making it optional for school corporations to change transfer tuition on students enrolling from outside the district's legal boundary.

□ As we told you to expect, an amendment was approved to postpone until July 1, 2011 the deadline for promulgating rules on sign language interpreters in an educational setting.

● Senate Education and Career Development Committee Chair **Dennis Kruse** (R) of Auburn authored SB 256, legislation that would create a new due process right for parents and students to request an administrative hearing before the local school superintendent in certain circumstances such as being denied participation in an extracurricular function or being subject to an illegal rule. Concerns were raised about how far the new due process right would extend. Would parents request a hearing if their daughter didn't make the cheerleading squad, if their son didn't make the Honor Roll, or if their child received an unsatisfactory grade on a final exam? The legislation was sent to a Summer study committee for 2010.

● The Senate passes a teen dating violence bill authored by Sen. **Earline Rogers** (D) of Gary, a retired teacher. The bill directs the Department of Education to develop guidelines that schools may use in professional development activities concerning dating violence. The guidelines must include the warning signs of dating violence; the basic principles of dating violence prevention; and methods of parental education and outreach.

● Sen. **Carlin Yoder** (R) of Middlebury withdrew SB 345 from consideration, but he tells us the issue may yet resurface as an amendment before the end of session. Sen Yoder had sought to abolish the Commission on Career and Technical Education and transfer its duties to the State Workforce Innovation Council. An amendment to the bill would have transferred the Commission's secondary education duties to the Indiana State Board of Education. Of the \$25 million in federal dollars received by the State for career and technical education, about 60% flows to high schools, and the State Board of Education would have gained new oversight on how those funds are distributed. The Commission on Career and Technical Ed is required to meet four times annually under federal law and six times under state law. But appointments to the group have expired, reappointments have not been made, and the Commission struggles to reach a quorum. Several Career and Technical Educators from across the State suggested the lack of meetings could put Indiana in violation of federal law, putting federal grants at risk.

● When we last left you, lawmakers and the administration were butting heads over how to interpret the fiscal impact of the third-grade reading bill. While no one seriously disputed the notion that having kids read at grade level by the third grade should be an important public policy goal, there was a difference of opinion on whether that goal would require a new financial commitment from the state, or whether schools ought to simply re-prioritize spending within existing resources.

□ Confusion also stemmed from a Legislative Services Agency fiscal analysis suggesting a price tag of some \$50 million for the literacy remedies prescribed in the bill. A good chunk of that estimate was attributable to the bill's provision that schools set aside 90 minutes for intensive reading instruction for students who struggle to read. The LSA analyst had calculated the \$50 million cost based on that 90-minute window being added on to the end of the school day, but the bill's authors say that was never their intent. And when some labeled the reading initiative as another "unfunded mandate" on schools, that was greeted by derision from the bill's supporters. If asking schools to teach kids to read is an unfunded mandate, then education in this state has a serious problem, went the customary retort. Let's pick up where we parted two weeks ago with SB 258 being recommitted from the Senate Education and Career Development Committee to the Senate Appropriations Committee in a spat between the Daniels Administration and lawmakers.

□ "There's no question the bill has a fiscal [impact]," said Senate Committee on Appropriations Chair **Luke Kenley** (R) of Noblesville at the start of panel deliberations. The entire third-grade retention plan was then stricken from the bill. In its place, senators added language to direct the State Board of Education to enact fiscally neutral rules (after a public hearing) for ending the social promotion of third-graders who struggle with reading. Any component of the plan with a fiscal impact would have to be presented to the General Assembly for consideration in 2011. The initial media reports on the stripped-down bill framed it as a political loss for the Governor and the Department of Education. Although they didn't get the comprehensive retention plan they wanted, the fact is the State Board of Education did not have the authority to create any retention rules without explicit direction from the General Assembly.

□ With the argument over the fiscal impact disarmed and postponed until another day and another venue, debate shifted to the role of the State Board of Education. "The same people who say the bill doesn't have a fiscal impact now will be those on the State Board of Education," said Sen. **Lindel Hume** (D) of Princeton during a committee hearing raising an objection that you'll likely hear repeated over the remainder of session. Sen. Kenley sought to assuage the concern of his colleague during the Appropriations hearing. "The failure by the State Board to act in a reasonable manner would be rectified in the court of public opinion," suggested the Senate Republican fiscal leader. And during Third Reading debate on the Senate floor, Sen. Kenley reiterated that "I hope the people involved in this process will use a little good faith, and if there is a question of a fiscal, it will be resolved by all parties." Senate Education and Career Development Committee Chair **Dennis Kruse** (R) of Auburn added, "I think they would have some sensitivity to the public. I hope they wouldn't ignore testimony and just promulgate rules that will cost money for local schools."

□ The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 33 - 17, with seven Republicans voting "no" and seven Democrats voting "yes."

### *IN Court . . .*

● The Middlebury Community Schools Board passes a resolution to retain Riley Bennett & Egloff LLP of Indianapolis in pursuit of litigation along with several other plaintiff school districts against the state to challenge to disparity in per-pupil funding amounts produced by the state's funding formula for suburban and growing school districts. According to the *Elkhart Truth*, the long-planned suit could be filed "sometime after mid-February."

## IN Higher Education

### *IN General . . .*

● Interest in the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology continues to grow as the engineering school has received more than 3,600 applications for the freshman class - an all-time record (and the second consecutive year here in which an application record has been set). Applications have now increased 20% over the past two years.

● Butler University's freshman retention rate from Fall 2009 to Spring 2010 is 96% - the highest in school history. The retention rate for all undergraduates from Fall to Spring is 95 percent.

● CampusReform.org rails against the Indiana University-Bloomington Economics Department and the Indiana Memorial Union Board for refusing to host Mises Institute senior scholar and economist **Dr. Thomas E. Woods, Jr.** on campus. The Young Americans for Liberty chapter whose request to host Woods was denied is fighting back against what it labels as "gross academic bias" and a "power play" with the assistance of CampusReform.org, a web site for conservative and libertarian student activists, and the national Young Americans for Liberty organization.

● The Indiana University School of Medicine plans to reduce the number of new students it admits next year, reports the *Indianapolis Star*, in response to state budget cuts. With 1,256 students enrolled last year, IU was the nation's second-largest medical school behind the University of Illinois. The school in downtown Indianapolis has historically accepted 280 new students each year, but that was gradually increased to 322 in response to expected physician shortages. "Our original plan was to continue a 30 percent expansion," said **Dr. D. Craig Brater**, IU medical school dean. "Now the question is: Do we cut back to 280 or 300?"

□ The IU medical school at South Bend said it would have been forced to cancel the third- and fourth-year program due to the budget cuts if not for financial donations from the local community, reports the *South Bend Tribune*.

● The Indiana University Student Association Congress passes several resolutions to update its election code in light of on-line voting for student government. One new rule limits the hours when a ticket can campaign from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. on both days of the election.

□ The change arose to prevent tickets from campaigning in bars on the election days. Another rule prohibits campaigns from using smart phones and laptop computers for voting purposes within 50 feet of bars. The Congress also imposed a \$5,000 expenditure limit per election cycle.

***IN Administration . . .***

● Indiana State University contends that its academic mission remains uncompromised by the pending elimination of 78 hourly and 30 salaried employees. A \$10.4 million budget reduction plan calls for an end to 25 jobs in the facilities department, while seven jobs will be cut in information technology, and 15 jobs will be cut from the Student Health Center (and replaced by a third-party vendor). A number of associate dean positions will also be eliminated.

***IN Programs & Policy . . .***

● Outgoing Purdue University Provost **Randy Woodson** will present to the Purdue University Board of Trustees this month a proposal to create a new College of Health and Human Services. The departments of Health and Kinesiology, Psychological Sciences, and Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences will become part of the new college, along with Nursing, Health Sciences, and the four departments that currently constitute the College of Consumer and Family Science.

● Purdue University's Krannert School of Management has been ranked in a tie for the ninth spot among U.S. public MBA programs, according to rankings by the *Financial Times*. Krannert's MBA program jumped 26 spots to tie for 54th worldwide. The national ranking improved to 28th among all U.S. business schools. Krannert's rank among Big Ten schools also rose, from ninth to fourth place.

● The University of Southern Indiana and Crane Naval Surface Warfare Center are set to announce a STEM-related partnership after we go to press with this issue.

***IN Gifts & Fundraising . . .***

● Purdue University ranks ninth in the nation among public universities in the market value of its endowment as of June 30, 2009, according to the National Association of College and University Business Officers. Purdue's endowment totaled \$1.46 billion, placing third in the Big Ten.

□ Indiana University ranks 11th among public universities, up from 12th in 2007-08 with a \$1.23 billion endowment that ranked fifth among the Big Ten public universities.

□ The market value of the Ball State University endowment dropped 29% last year to \$134 million.

□ For charitable contributions during calendar year 2009, here are the top five Indiana schools:

- Indiana University: \$247.6 million (down 39%)
- University of Notre Dame: \$186 million (down 30%)
- Purdue University: \$173.8 million (down 0.1%)
- Wabash College: \$18.6 million (up 108%)
- University of Evansville: \$17.4 million (up 23%)

***IN Construction . . .***

● The Greencastle Common Council expects to transfer a tad more than 14 acres to Ivy Tech Community College for future expansion. A new 33,300 square-foot facility in Greencastle opened in September, but space is already at a premium.

***IN Transition . . .***

● Governor **Mitch Daniels** (R) is unanimously elected to the Board of Trustees of Western Governors University, a non-profit, fully on-line university founded in 1997 by 19 western governors, including then-Gov. Frank O'Bannon (D).

● **Dr. Hank Dunn**, Chancellor of the Ivy Tech Community College-Indianapolis campus, has accepted the position of President of Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College in North Carolina, effective March 1. **Dr. Kathleen Lee**, dean of academic affairs at the Indianapolis Campus, will serve as acting chancellor.

● **Dr. Boyd A. Bradshaw** becomes the vice president for enrollment management at Valparaiso University. He comes to Valpo after serving in senior enrollment management roles at the University of Louisville, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville and, most recently, as vice provost of Saint Louis University's Division of Enrollment Management.

● **John Shipley**, comptroller at Purdue University, is named the next vice president and treasurer of the University of Miami in Florida. Shipley had been with Purdue in a financial/operational capacity for more than 25 years.

● Indiana University School of Education Executive Associate Dean **Donald Hossler** is appointed executive director of the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC), the non-profit organization that maintains a comprehensive registry of higher education student data. He will split his duties 50-50 between IU and the NSCRC.

● **John A. Sautter**, vice president for housing and food services at Purdue University, will retire after serving nearly four decades at Purdue, effective June 30.

● Purdue University names three finalists for the position of executive vice president for academic affairs and provost:

□ **E. Daniel Hirleman**, professor and William E. and Florence E. Perry Head of the School of Mechanical Engineering. Hirleman has been at Purdue since 1999 when he was appointed head of mechanical engineering. He is the founding director of GlobalHub.org, a National Science Foundation Engineering Virtual Organization.

□ **Richard J. Kuhn**, professor and head of the Department of Biological Sciences and Gerald and Edna Mann Director of the Bindley Bioscience Center. Kuhn has been at Purdue since 1991, starting as an assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences. He was named director of Bindley Bioscience Center in 2007.

□ Timothy D. Sands, Basil S. Turner Professor of Engineering in the schools of Materials Engineering and Electrical and Computer Engineering and Mary Jo and Robert L. Kirk Director of Birck Nanotechnology Center. Sands has been at Purdue since 2002 when he was hired for a joint appointment in materials engineering and electrical and computer engineering. He was named director of the Birck Nanotechnology Center in 2006.

● Arden L. Bement, Jr., a former Purdue University nuclear engineering professor and department head who has served as director of the National Science Foundation since 2004, is tabbed to lead Purdue's new Global Policy Research Institute.

● Elizabeth E. Dunn will be the new dean of the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences at Indiana University South Bend. She comes from Bemidji State University and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from Purdue University.

### *IN Government . . .*

● U.S. Rep. Steve Buyer (R) makes the stunning - and emotional - announcement that he will not seek a 10th term in Congress due to his wife's recently diagnosed life-threatening autoimmune disease. His retirement also comes at a time when Democrats continue to ratchet up scrutiny over the controversial Frontier Foundation started by Buyer to support needy Hoosier students with scholarships. The Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington filed tax and ethics complaints over this in late January, calling on the IRS and the Office of Congressional Ethics to investigate whether the charitable mission of the Foundation had been misused.

● After huddling with university officials, SB 84 authored by Sen. Mike Delph (R) of Carmel is amended and passed out of the full Senate. The bill requires public universities to make available their extensive on-line research tools (including journal subscriptions) to lawmakers and Legislative Services Agency staff when requested, in an effort to elevate the level of professionalism of the legislature. Testimony from the Indiana State Library pointed out that more than 10,000 research journals and periodicals are already available at no cost to all citizens of the state through the State Library's INSPIRE data bases.

□ As amended, the bill also directs the Legislative Council to conduct a survey of all members of the General Assembly, the partisan staffs of the General Assembly, and the employees of the Legislative Services Agency to determine which specific journals and research tools that are not available through the INSPIRE data bases would assist in completing legislative responsibilities.

□ The amended bill also calls on the Legislative Council and the Indiana University School of Law - Indianapolis to study the feasibility of and interest in establishing a research and policy development division within the Legislative Services Agency. In conducting the study, LSA will be required to examine any similar programs established in other states, including the cost of those programs.

● SB 378, legislation authored by Sen. Greg Walker (R) of Columbus that would require state educational institutions to disclose gifts from foreign entities, is defeated in the Senate on Third Reading by a vote of 38 - 12. Eight of 11 members of the new Senate Conservative Caucus voted in favor of the bill. At a Senate Education and Career Development Committee hearing on the measure, Sen. Walker began by explaining the concern that certain foreign entities are channeling money into the United States via institutions of higher education in the furtherance of subversive activities. He belies that Indiana should assist law enforcement in following the money trail by requiring state educational institutions to report any gift of a value that exceeds \$100,000 made by a foreign government, foreign legal entity, or foreign person. "Gift" as defined in the bill broadly encompassed an endowment, gift, grant, contract, award, or property of any kind. Sen. Frank Mrvan Jr. (D) of Hammond told Sen. Walker, "I know you are a true patriot," and said "I am old enough where [Sen. Joe] McCarthy is still in my mind. Can we prove the money is being used illicitly?" Sen. Walker responded that subversive groups dole out cash to school in exchange for an honorary degree, which lends them credibility that they use to gain entrance into the United States. Sen. Mrvan responded that he would be surprised if Hoosier universities dished out honorary degrees for payola.

● State education institutions could receive accreditation for dual credit courses from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, under SB 257. Standard practice is for institutions to seek dual credit accreditation from the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships. But the Ivy Tech Community College organizational structure of having multiple campuses across the state overseen by a central office in Indianapolis has overwhelmed NACEP, said lawmakers. The deadline for receiving accreditation from either NACEP or now ICHE was extended from June 30, 2008 to June 30, 2010.

● HB 1065 allowing Hoosiers to tote firearms to their places of employment as long as they stay locked away in a vehicle passes the House after it was amended to exclude state educational institutions . . . although pro-gun supporters, citing the shootings at Virginia Tech in 2007, may work to bring higher education back into the mix.

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