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JOURNAL

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The
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28 SCHOOL DISTRICT SPOTLIGHT

Duneland School Corporation

Birth-to-School Program:

THE EARLY LEARNING HUB



by Dr. Chip Pettit, Superintendent, Duneland School Corporation

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A SEASON *of* GRATITUDE

By Tom Simpson, ISBA President



As the calendar year comes to a close, those of us in the “business” of public education mark the halfway point of the school year. Maybe it’s me, and the fact I am a few years north of 60, but it seems like school just started last week! But here we are, and I hope you are as grateful as I am for what was a fairly normal first semester. I’m not a fan of status quo when it comes to education, but normal sounds pretty good!

Speaking of normal, I am grateful that our students and teachers have enjoyed in-person learning and all of the typical field trips and extracurricular activities that we took for

granted just a few short years ago. As a child of the sixties, it brings to mind the lyrics from Joni Mitchell’s iconic song Big Yellow Taxi, “Don’t it always seem to go, that you don’t know what you’ve got til it’s gone.” Not exactly a grammar lesson but a life lesson nonetheless given the recent past.

I’m also grateful that the dramatic uptick in technology (one-to-one devices) in many of our school districts has provided students so much more at their literal fingertips to further their education. This falls under the “silver-lining” department.

Here's the rest of my laundry list of gratitude that I hope you also share in this season of thanks:

Uncommon School Leaders: There is no substitute for an outstanding superintendent and a strong administrative team in your district. One thing I've learned in almost 20 years on the Yorktown school board is that your ability to be an effective school board member multiplies exponentially if this is true, and I'm grateful for ours! Here's a little secret ... your district success has much more to do with these folks than your board! The paradox is without a good school board, you'll never find or keep great administrators. Keep up the good work folks!

Hungry Teachers: Not the folks monitoring the lunchroom but rather the kind of educators who are curious, challenging, innovative and passionate about making a difference every day. Like public education in general, teachers get a bum rap from some policymakers who don't like the union, but the majority of teachers I know work harder and smarter to improve their skills than ever before.

Engaged Guardians: I changed this from parents to guardians because the faces who raise and nurture our students are more diverse than ever. It's no secret that an engaged adult who bears a sense of responsibility to prioritize education in their kids' lives is invaluable to those whose livelihood is educating said kids. Supportive parents who partner alongside us to help their children learn are a tremendous gift.

The School Village: It's become a clichéd phrase, but only because it is true. In addition to our teachers and guardians, we have a whole host of people, ranging from bus drivers to custodians to food service staff, not to mention coaches and school secretaries, who watch over our students like they were their own! Grateful isn't a big enough word to cover these people so let's throw in EXTREMELY.

Caring Students: As a school board member, I hope you get to see up close the hearts of our students in action. I know they are kids, and they will have their moments and make mistakes, but to see kids embrace their classmates who are different or come together to raise money for local charities or buy gifts for families during the holidays who are in need is truly inspiring. This generation of Instagrammers and Tik Tokkers can be puzzling at times, but thankfully, kindness and love are still going strong.

Community Partners: In our small town, we are blessed with some very generous and willing businesses and organizations who believe (like we do) that public education and local schools are the foundation of our community and society. These wonderful people, including some who have no children in our schools, often approach us before we even have a chance to ask for help with vocational, financial and volunteer support. Without them, we cannot achieve our full potential.

Citizen Lawmakers: For most of my time as a school board member, it's been popular to bash legislators for not doing their part to fund or support public schools. There's not enough room in this column to discuss the pros and cons of this debate, but I believe the majority of our representatives in the statehouse attended a public school and their children or grandchildren do too. I'm grateful that ISBA as an organization has encouraged meaningful dialogue and advanced legislation that educates our fellow citizens – and citizen lawmakers – on what we are doing to improve public education and the successes we are achieving together. There's still much to be done, but we are moving the needle!

Well-Trained Boards: Not all boards are created equal, although all have the opportunity to avail themselves of the same resources to improve. I have tunnel vision at times because our local school board has been so effective, thanks in large part to the education and training we've received from ISBA. It takes a while to become truly good at this job and to understand how to put personal interest aside for the betterment of the whole. Some boards never get there and even the best don't always get it right. But for those who do take the time to train, educate, and align themselves to the appropriate role, THANK YOU! You are the epitome of a public servant, and your calling to help kids – all kids – is inspiring.

I know by the time you read this that the New Year will have begun, and I'll likely be apologizing to someone who I left off of my Grateful List. Just know that I truly am grateful for everyone who makes public education their vocation or is dedicated to helping kids succeed. You are appreciated and valued! 🍀

Tom Simpson is president of the Indiana School Boards Association and a member of the Yorktown Community Schools Board of School Trustees.



GRASSROOTS ADVOCACY

is ESSENTIAL in Making the Case for Our Public Schools



By Terry Spradlin, Executive Director

With the 2022 general election behind us, ISBA welcomes 338 new school board members to the Association in 2023. We are gearing up to support these members with the comprehensive and timely programming provided through ISBA's New Board Member Academy that runs through June. This is not the only important work that we are conducting now on behalf of our members. We are actively working to fulfill our commitment to advocate on behalf of Indiana's nearly 1,700 school board members, and K-12 public education broadly, through our legislative services known as our Legislative Action Network. We need the help of all school board members to be successful with this work.

Are you ready to engage today in state-level grassroots advocacy

to help inform, influence, and shape sound K-12 education policy? Are you ready and willing to be a champion of our public schools and to be an advocate for the more than 1 million Hoosier students in our classrooms? Are you familiar with how the Indiana School Boards Association (ISBA) sets its legislative priorities to support model school board governance and promote exemplary educational opportunities for Hoosier students? Why is this work even important?

The first regular session of the 123rd Indiana General Assembly convened on January 9, 2023. This will be a "long session" that is required by law to conclude no later than April 29. This is also a budget session that will result in a new two-year (biennial) state budget that appropriates more than \$18 billion per year on



state programs and services. In the FY 2022 and FY 2023 General Fund appropriations, the proportion spent on K-12 education has been 44.8% of all state expenditures. In FY 2023 that runs through June 30, 2023, more than \$8 billion/year is appropriated to the tuition support formula that funds the Education Fund budgets of school corporations. Policymakers will have significant discussion that will center on how much of an increase to dedicate to K-12 education.

Beyond funding matters, it is anticipated that K-12 education policy will remain a priority issue among the hundreds of bills introduced for consideration. The Indiana School Boards Association (ISBA) is dedicated to improving the quality of education provided to students by public schools throughout the state of Indiana. ISBA recognizes the role of the General Assembly in enacting legislation that impacts public education and is committed to representing the interests of its member school corporations when addressing legislative initiatives. You

have a role to play, too. The ISBA Code of Ethics states that a school board member should honor the high responsibility that membership demands by “recognizing responsibility as a State official to seek the improvement of education throughout the State.” This statement supports the role school board members have to communicate with state policymakers on issues impacting public education.

If you were among the approximately 1,000 people in attendance at one of the 10 ISBA Fall Regional Meetings, you heard the report on the 2023 Legislative Priorities and received information in the booklet about the Legislative Action Network (LAN). This column will be a quick read to refresh you on what you need to know to lend your voice now during the legislative session. If you are a newer school board member or have been a casual observer of the state legislature and grassroots advocacy, please know that your voice matters. We need to be ready to be a strong voice and united champion for K-12 public education while

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advocating for the ISBA 2023 legislative priorities. Let us unite to collectively elevate our advocacy efforts, as much is at stake!

HOW DOES ISBA SET ITS PRIORITIES?

ISBA relies on four committees comprised of regional representatives of our school board members to help provide leadership and direction to govern the work of the Association, including a Legislative Committee. This is a 20-member committee, with two school board members from each of the 10 ISBA regions. The Legislative Committee meets annually during the summer to discuss education policy and board governance matters. Its core duty is to set annual legislative priorities and develop and affirm foundational statements. The legislative priorities are a short list of proactive agenda items ISBA hopes to accomplish during each session to support our mission. The foundational statements are principles that guide the Association's positions on the many bills impacting K-12 education that are not explicitly addressed in the priorities. I liken the foundational statements to a compass and roadmap to ensure that we effectively represent your views. Once approved by the committee, these core documents move to the Delegate Assembly for adoption. Every school board is entitled to have a member represent it at the Delegate Assembly. The 2022 Delegate Assembly convened on October 3, 2022, where these documents were approved unanimously by voice vote.

WHY IS YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN ADVOCACY SO IMPORTANT?

Especially at a time when social and political challenges confront K-12 public education more than ever before, your voice representing the best interests of Hoosier students must be heard. You have clout! You have firsthand understanding of your school corporation's goals, student achievement outcomes, and resource needs. You regularly deal with the complexities of school corporation budgeting and financial matters. You are an informed source of information about education policy. Finally, you have a story to tell and can relate how proposed legislation impacts your school community.

One bill comes to mind from the 2019 session to illustrate what the strength in numbers of school board members speaking up and out at the right time, and with a unified message, can achieve. Senate Bill 246 was on the third reading calendar in the Senate that would have greatly restricted when school corporations can conduct a referendum. This bill was adversarial to local control and would have restricted the ability of school corporations to generate necessary funds for projects, programs, or personnel. It took a tremendous effort and a timely response to a call-to-action alert from educators and school board members to contact area senators in opposition to the bill, to kill the bill. One legislator told

me that he changed his position to align with our position on the bill because he "heard from 12 constituents over the (prior) weekend asking for his vote against the bill." The senator considered this a significant number that was enough to sway his position. The bill was not called down on the last

day for the third reading of bills and we prevailed in killing the proposal. This is powerful evidence of what we can accomplish together!

Some might be inclined to think that their personal efforts will not make a difference, but this perspective leads to apathy. If we are not passionate to defend the pillar of American democracy, then why should we expect legislators to share our views and positions? Engagement in the advocacy process can make all the difference. Sharing "your local story" is impactful, too. To assist school board members to be successful advocates in the policymaking process, ISBA has created the Legislative Action Network.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION NETWORK

While your ISBA lobby team strives to be in the right place at the right time, our two voices (Lisa Tanselle, General Counsel, and I) are more effective when our efforts are complemented by a troop of school board members participating in the Legislative Action Network, ISBA's formal grassroots advocacy program. The LAN is designed to help unify and mobilize "the voice" of school board members and increase State House visibility. Through this program, we provide you with the information, resources, strategies, and guidance to engage in the grassroots advocacy process. The program to cultivate and coordinate the localized grassroots

ESPECIALLY AT A TIME WHEN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES CONFRONT K-12 PUBLIC EDUCATION MORE THAN EVER BEFORE, YOUR VOICE REPRESENTING THE BEST INTERESTS OF HOOSIER STUDENTS MUST BE HEARD. YOU HAVE CLOUT!

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advocacy efforts is through each school board's designated legislative liaison, although we encourage all board members to engage in grassroots advocacy.

DUTIES OF THE LEGISLATIVE LIAISON

- ✓ Know and support the 2023 ISBA Legislative Priorities
- ✓ Know your area legislators: go to the IGA "find your legislator" website link: <http://iga.in.gov/legislative/find-legislators/>
- ✓ Track ISBA Legislative Services/LAN communications and provide timely updates on legislative session activities at school board meetings. We suggest making this a regular board meeting agenda item
- ✓ Identify ISBA legislative priorities for which you will be willing to testify, if necessary, during committee hearings on these bills
- ✓ Communicate regularly via email, phone calls, or letters with area legislators
- ✓ Make yourself a contact and trusted source for your legislators within your district
- ✓ Coordinate email, phone call, or letter writing campaigns to your area legislators, media, and the broader community, especially in response to call-to-action alerts
- ✓ Organize legislative forums or attend "Third House" meetings hosted by other organizations

To become your school corporation's Legislative Action Network Liaison, please have your superintendent send your name and preferred contact information to Casey Conrad at: cconrad@isba-ind.org.

ISBA LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AND WEB RESOURCES

Legislative services are one of the four core services that ISBA provides to members. As mentioned, Lisa Tanselle, General Counsel, and I am your registered lobbyists who are your "boots on the ground." We cover committee hearings, testify on bills, and communicate regularly with legislators. The legislative services from ISBA include:

- ✓ State House representation
- ✓ Weekly ISBA legislative updates (typically every Friday during session)
- ✓ Bill tracking list service (updated in real time each session day)
- ✓ Live legislative update webinars (once per month)
- ✓ Call-to-action legislative alerts (as needed on critical issues)

- ✓ Website resources
- ✓ ISBA Advocacy Guide (third edition available on the Legislative Services page of the ISBA website)
- ✓ 5th Annual State House Day (February 21, 2023; more details below)

The first step in effective grassroots advocacy is to get informed. Preparation will make you a more confident and successful advocate. There are many resources available to help you build your knowledge base. The Legislative Services page of the ISBA website includes key resources to follow the 2023 session and adoption of new K-12 laws and is located at: <http://www.isba-ind.org/legislative.html>. The Indiana General Assembly website is naturally the best resource to track the activity of the legislature and is located at: <http://www.iga.in.gov>

COME TO INDY FOR THE 5TH ANNUAL STATE HOUSE DAY FEBRUARY 21, 2023

Culminate your advocacy efforts and help ensure a successful legislative session for K-12 public education by participating in ISBA's 5th Annual State House Day on February 21, 2023. The State House Day event will include a briefing session on key K-12 education bills moving in the session, two legislator panels (one featuring the caucus leaders and one with the leaders of the education committees), and State House office visits or calls with your area legislators. We invite two members (preferably the board president and legislative liaison) to represent your board at this event. ISBA will be sending detailed information about this event, including registration, regularly beginning in January. If you have any questions about the event, please contact Casey Conrad (cconrad@isba-ind.org) or me (tspradlin@isba-ind.org) with any questions.

CONCLUSION

Be ready! Please take time to acquaint yourself with the full details of the ISBA 2023 Legislative Priorities and Foundational Statements. Resolve to write a letter, send an email, or make a call to your area legislators now and throughout the session. Together we are better when we stand up for Hoosier students and high-quality schools with a unified voice. Your local engagement and leadership are paramount to our success. Thank you for your ongoing contributions and response to the call-to-action to support K-12 public education in Indiana. Let's keep "fighting the good fight!" 🗡️

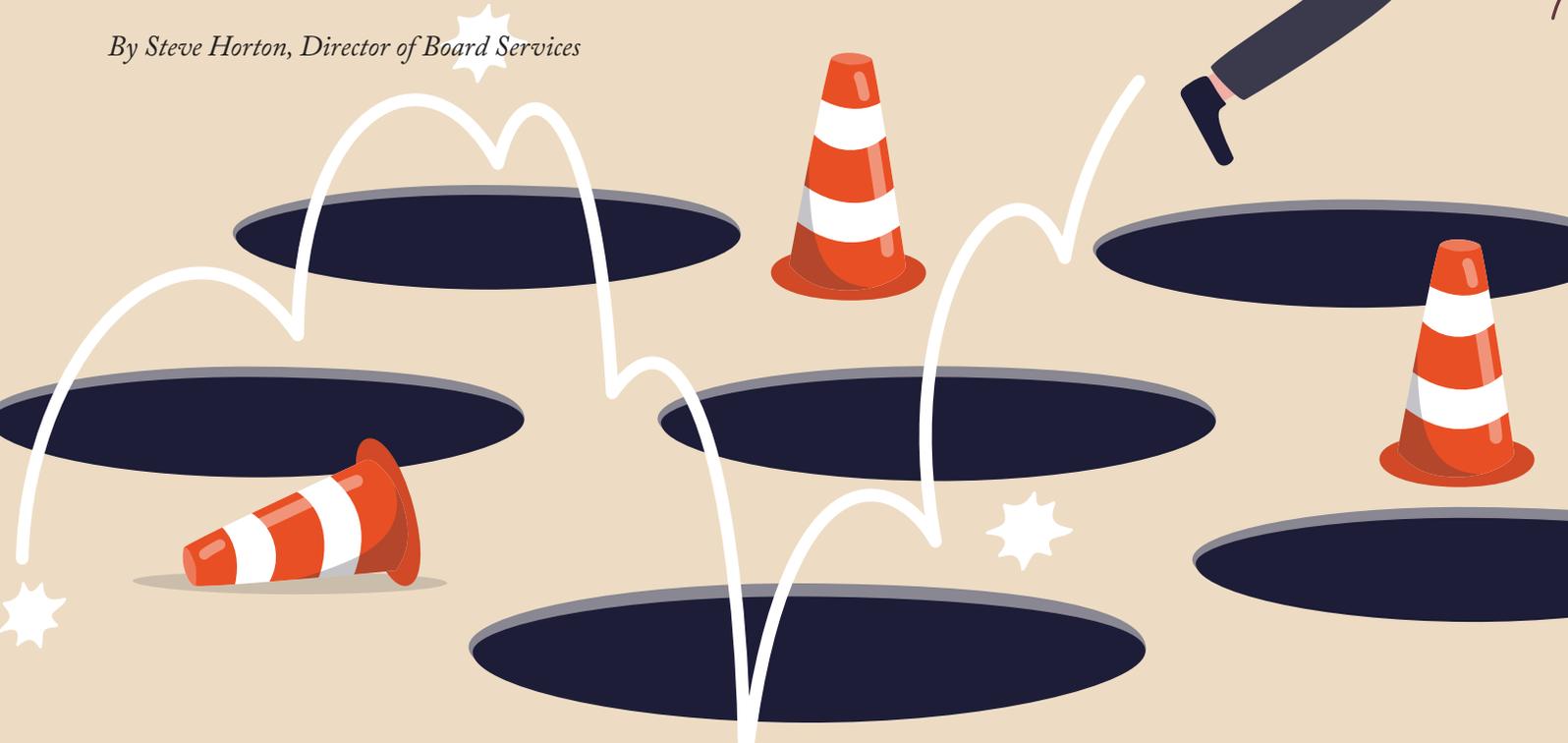


SO NOW YOU'RE A BOARD MEMBER:

HOW DO YOU AVOID SOME COMMON PITFALLS?



By Steve Horton, Director of Board Services



A universal truth about school board service is that it is not easy, and it is often unpredictable. In the absence of a magic crystal ball, it is rather difficult to know what lies ahead and what challenges our school boards will be asked to manage. There is no set playbook, nor step by step instructions.

There are, however, clear principles of boardmanship that do provide important guidance for avoiding some words and phrases often associated with poor board member performance that are never viewed in a positive way.

MICROMANAGEMENT

Perhaps this is the term used most often to describe problematic boards and individual board members. It refers to those who do not do a good job of staying out of the daily operations and administration work of the corporation. For some board members, the ability to let the administration do their jobs is difficult if not seemingly impossible. It is not unusual to hear superintendents say that often the most difficult part of their jobs is managing board members who overstep the boundaries of good governance.

Micromanagement takes on many forms. Often it manifests itself in board decisions that override or replace decisions that should be made by the superintendent. There is nothing to stop a board from passing a resolution that should have been an action resulting from a superintendent recommendation. While the hope is that boards and their superintendents will spend quality time together establishing clear goals and objectives for the school year and evaluating progress through the year, there is a fine line between setting a goal and expectations versus simply telling a superintendent what to do.

Many times micromanagement is a result of ineffective communication. The best of board members' intentions can result in overreach when there is a sense that critical decisions or needs are being left unattended. Trust also plays a great role in this discussion. A high level of trust is crucial

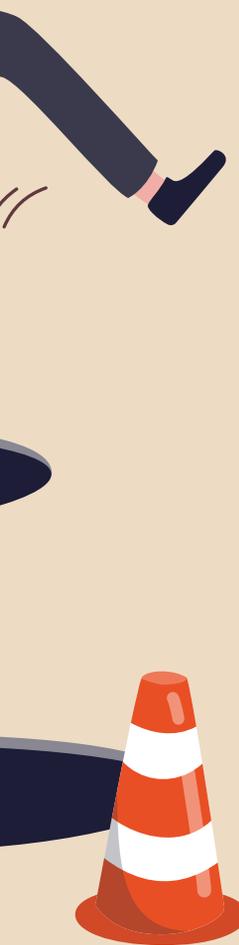
to maintaining the proper roles of governance and administration necessary to ensure the best possible operation of the corporation. This brings me to the second term of great consternation.

ROGUE BOARD MEMBERS

For all the conversations I have had with board members and superintendents, I have yet to hear one person refer to "rogue" in a good way. It is referring to the board member that refuses to play by the same norms as his or her fellow members. Policy and protocol are merely suggestions that can be ignored when it is not convenient or useful to one's end game. The true rogue member can do significant damage to trust, communication, morale, and overall perception of the board and school corporation.

It is extremely difficult to deal with this person. It is very important to clearly establish guidelines and working norms for the board's professional and personal conduct. Beyond that, if you are truly dealing with a bully, one piece of advice I find helpful is to take inventory of the ways in which you are enabling the bully. Do not let a member prevent you from doing your work together and seeking consensus. It is also important to continue to listen. Not to let one person rule, but to consider that everyone's input may be important to the final outcome regardless of your feelings about the person.

One point I hope all our newly elected members take to heart is how they come into their new position. I will always advocate for bringing your passion and commitment to the job but realize that you are the new member. Enter the new position with questions and a willingness to listen and learn. Do not allow yourself to be labeled as a rogue before you have had the opportunity to prove yourself as a valuable contributing member of the leadership team. Hopefully you will be able to help the board avoid another unfortunate label.



DYSFUNCTIONAL

This is the term used to describe boards that struggle to communicate, present themselves poorly to the public, and too often undermine the positive work being done in the corporation. This is not an individual issue; it is a leadership team issue. I have worked with boards that seemingly wear the dysfunctional label like a badge of honor. It is never a good situation and one only the board can resolve for themselves.

Where does dysfunction come from? Ultimately, there is no issue that cannot be resolved or worked through by a leadership team who realizes the work is “you and me vs. the issue” and not “you vs. me.” Typically, the members of the board cease to work together in a productive way when disagreements are allowed to become personal. When that happens, differences are not seen or accepted as merely a different viewpoint or perspective. They are allowed to be a statement about one’s credibility or character. In today’s culture that is exacerbated by social media. Digital social outlets are an embedded part of our society, and unfortunately, board members have used them in a destructive way toward one another. If there is one thing all board members should avoid, it is taking board business and personal grievances to the public through their personal social media. Resolution of differences should happen between board members, not in the court of public opinion.

Conflict is actually a productive and necessary ingredient for innovation and growth. Without healthy conflict, status quo becomes the norm, and “we’ve always done it this way” becomes the mode of

operation. In a proper speak up culture, members are allowed to voice opinions and share viewpoints of different perspectives without questioning another member’s integrity. Another aspect of a functioning speak up culture is that if a statement or action feels hurtful or intentional toward another member, it is not ignored or simply swept under the carpet. Members should be allowed to express their feelings and that should be taken as an opportunity to understand each other better as opposed to a returned personal attack. If I know that something I did hurt you, I should acknowledge that and endeavor not to do it again. It is a mutual respect shared by the entire board.

The only road out of a dysfunctional relationship is open communication, the ability to have the necessary conversation with the right person, and to focus on the issue at hand, not our differences.

Nobody said school governance was easy. Sometimes, despite our best work boards receive unwanted labels.

RUBBER STAMP

A fairly regular criticism of school boards across the country is that they are nothing more than a rubber stamp for the superintendent. Years ago, I sat in a board candidate workshop next to a gentleman who insisted that his board did nothing but vote yes, and someone had to do something about that. There was no clear understanding about what “that” was, but someone needed to do “something.”

The rubber stamp label often assumes that yes votes are inherently bad while overlooking the fact that truly good consensus work should result in a vote in the affirmative. The issue is that often the data study, discussion, and

brainstorming that leads to a decision acceptable for all members of the board is not seen by the community. When Gary Brochu, former board chair for the Berlin Connecticut Public Schools Board of Trustees was asked about why their board had so many yes votes, his answer was, “we practice boring professionalism.” That is not a bad thing for all boards to pursue, but what is the public perception?

In the midst of the work that is being done, it is easy to overlook the need to communicate well with the community. Public meetings are a time to share important details about the work people don’t necessarily see. Unfortunately, when money needs to be cut from the budget one of the first positions to get the axe is communications. I contend that every corporation regardless of size needs someone to oversee communications. You will never satisfy all the naysayers, but ultimately your goal should be to write your narrative and not let others write it for you. It is a full-time job and not one that should be handed to others who already have full plates.

IN THE END

The reality is that all of these labels and problematic situations require one thing: good boardmanship. There are plenty of manuals to refer to, but in the end, it all comes down to a very straightforward reality. We need to allow for differences, and diversity of thought. All of the resources devoted to helping school boards do their work effectively point out that good school governance is establishing a strong vision and focusing on the results. Ultimately that focus leads to our children. The beauty of public education is that it exists for all children. Perhaps that is a good place to start. 🎓



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LAWS THAT BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD KNOW

By Lisa F. Tanselle, Esq., General Counsel



There are many laws that impact a school board and how the board carries out its responsibilities. While a school board member is not expected to know all the laws (that is the responsibility of the attorney hired by the board), it is important for board members to understand some basic legal principles so that they correctly and legally fulfill their responsibilities. A few of the laws that all board members should know are summarized below.

BOARD ORGANIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Indiana law requires school boards to “organize” annually by electing a president, vice-president, and secretary. The law requires this meeting to take place within the first 15 days of the beginning of the board members’ terms. Since most board members start their term of office on January 1, boards will have to fulfill this obligation no later than January 16, 2023. (Since January 16, 2023, is a holiday, this

deadline can be extended to January 17, 2023.)¹

There is little guidance in state law regarding the roles of these officers. However, Indiana law does state that the president (and the superintendent) has the authority to call a special meeting.² Indiana law also states that the board president and secretary are authorized to sign contracts after they have been approved by a majority of the board.³ If neither the board president nor board secretary are available to sign the contracts, the vice-president of the board may sign the contracts.

BOARD COMPENSATION

Indiana law allows a board to pay itself up to \$2000/year for board services. The board is required to pass a resolution stating the amount of compensation the board members may receive. A board may also authorize the payment of a per diem for attendance at board meetings. The maximum per diem amount is established by the Board of School Trustees of the Indianapolis Public Schools.⁵ Local school boards may then determine a rate that does not exceed that maximum rate. The current maximum per diem amount for regular meetings is \$112 and \$62 for special meetings.

BOARD MEETINGS

In Title 20 of the Indiana Code, board meetings are defined as regular meetings or special meetings. Regular meetings are established by board resolution and are those monthly or bi-monthly meetings held each month for the conduct of board business.⁵ All other meetings are considered special meetings.

Title 20 requires all board meetings to be held within the boundaries of the school corporation (with two or three exceptions). One of the exceptions allows a school board to hold up to two training sessions per year outside the boundaries of the school corporation.⁶

These provisions also require a quorum of the board to be present in order to conduct a meeting. A quorum is defined as a majority of the members of the school board. The law further states that action may be taken when approved by a majority of the members present unless a specific statute requires a greater number.

There are two instances wherein the law requires a greater vote: (1) when approving contracts (the law requires a majority of the entire board to approve of the contract)⁷ and (2) when filling a vacancy on the school board (the law requires a majority of the remaining members of the board to approve of the person appointed to fill the vacancy).⁸

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS SHOULD UNDERSTAND SOME BASIC LEGAL PRINCIPLES, INCLUDING:

- Board Organization Requirements
- Board Compensation
- Board Meetings
- Hiring and Firing Authority
- The Superintendent's Contract
- Staff Performance Evaluation Requirements
- Collective Bargaining
- Adopting a Budget

The Open Door Law applies to meetings of the governing bodies of public agencies, including school boards. The Open Door Law requires meetings of the governing bodies to be open to the public unless the law allows the board to meet behind closed doors, or in executive sessions.⁹ The authority of the board to meet in executive session is very limited, and therefore board members should understand that the vast majority of their meetings will be meetings that are open to the public.

The Open Door Law also requires the public agency to give the public and news media organizations notice of its meetings. According to the Law, the agency must give the public at least 48 hours' notice of any meeting, with the 48 hours excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays.¹⁰ Notice is given by mailing, emailing, or faxing to news media the date, time, and place of the meeting and by posting the date, time, and place of the meeting at the administrative offices of the school corporation.

The school board is not required to use an agenda, but if it does, the agenda must be posted outside the location of the meeting room some time before the meeting.¹¹

The Open Door Law requires the school board to give patrons who are physically present at the meeting the opportunity to provide public comment. The Law allows the board to adopt reasonable rules to regulate the taking of public comment.¹²

The Open Door Law also requires governing bodies to maintain notes and memoranda identifying the date, time, and place of the meeting, which board members were present and those who were absent, and a general summary of the matters

discussed or decided by the board. The notes can thereafter be approved as minutes of the meeting.¹³

Lastly, Indiana law allows a board member to participate in a meeting virtually if the board has adopted a policy that allows remote participation.¹⁴ A majority of the board must still be physically present at the meeting. There are other limitations in statute regarding virtual participation in a meeting, including language that prohibits any member from participating virtually if the agenda for the meeting includes such matters as adopting a budget, initiating a referendum, and establishing fees.

HIRING AND FIRING AUTHORITY

Indiana law requires the superintendent to bring to the board recommendations on the hiring of all employees. The board must approve the recommendations in order for the person's employment to be valid. The same is true when dismissing an employee: the superintendent must recommend a person's dismissal, and the board must approve of the dismissal.¹⁵

Once hired, Indiana law requires all teachers (or certified employees) to be given a regular teacher contract (with some exceptions).¹⁶ The contract must be signed by the teacher and the board.¹⁷ There is no contract requirement for noncertified employees. Those employees who do not need a specific license to perform their duties may, at the discretion of the board, be given a contract. But the vast majority of noncertified employees are employed without a contract, or on an at-will basis.

When terminating a teacher (or certified employee), Indiana law requires the school board to provide the teacher with due process and specifies a process for the administration and the school board to follow.¹⁸ There are no due process requirements for the termination of a noncertified employee who does not have a written contract.

THE SUPERINTENDENT'S CONTRACT

When hiring a new superintendent or entering into a new contract with an existing superintendent, Indiana law requires a school board to publish the proposed terms of the contract on its website and in the newspaper. The board is also required to give patrons the opportunity at a public meeting to comment on the proposed terms of the contract. The board must wait at least seven days after this public meeting before it can vote to enter into the contract.¹⁹

Indiana law also limits the length of the superintendent's contract to no more than three years. The board may renew an

existing contract for up to five years. The board is also limited as to the amount of money it may pay a superintendent in situations where the board chooses to buy out the superintendent.²⁰

STAFF PERFORMANCE EVALUATION REQUIREMENTS

Indiana law requires the annual evaluation of certified employees, including the superintendent.²¹ The superintendent and other administrators are responsible for the evaluation of teachers. The board is responsible for the evaluation of the superintendent. The law identifies specific criteria for the evaluations.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

School boards are required to bargain with teacher associations with respect to salary, wages, and fringe benefits.²² Boards may not bargain any other topics. The law requires the school employer to hold a public hearing before it begins the bargaining process and again after it reaches a tentative agreement with the teacher association.²³ If the school employer and the teacher association cannot come to agreement on a master contract within a 60-day window, the statutory impasse procedures are triggered. These procedures could culminate with a fact-finder imposing the terms of the contract on the parties.²⁴

ADOPTING A BUDGET

The proposed budget for the school corporation will be prepared by the administration with input from the school board. Indiana law requires the proposed budget to be published in the newspaper and requires the school board to conduct a public hearing before voting to adopt the budget.²⁵ The school corporation's budget must then be submitted to the Department of Local Government Finance for certification.²⁶ 🗳️

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- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
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| 9. IC 5-14-15-1 | 21. IC 20-28-11.5-4 |
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25
YEARS

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Policy Advisor

By Julie M. Slavens, Esq., Senior Counsel/Director of Policy Services

A background image showing a woman with blonde hair and glasses, wearing a light blue shirt, looking down at a document in a meeting. Two men in business attire are visible in the background, one on the left and one on the right, also looking at the document.

AN IMPORTANT FUNCTION
OF A SCHOOL BOARD:
**POLICY
DEVELOPMENT**

The November 2022 election resulted in many new school board members beginning terms in January 2023.

As a primer for newly elected school board members and a reminder for veteran school board members, this article will address an important function of a school board – that of policymakers. A school board’s major function is to adopt policies to guide the operation of the school corporation. Policy development is one of, if not, the most important function of the school board.

School board policies prescribe in general terms the purpose, organization, and program of a school corporation. Policy statements guide the board in making decisions and assigning authority to the school administration. They create a framework

or direction within which the superintendent and the staff can perform their assigned duties. Policies establish a defined course of action to guide decision-making while allowing for flexibility in the daily operations of the school corporation.

School board policies need to be in writing, as written policy demonstrates a business-like operation, provides credibility to board action, creates a record for insurance and other legal matters, clarifies board and administrative functions, and provides consistency to the operations of the school corporation.

Written board policies also serve as transitional aids to new board members and provide clear notice of expectations of conduct by school employees and students. The individual policies adopted by the board should be placed in a policy manual organized by general topic areas such as Bylaws, Administration, Personnel, Students, Instruction, Financial Management, Property Management, and School-Community Relations. Policy manuals should also be made available and/or distributed to every board member, school administrator, other school employees, local public libraries, and school libraries, in addition to being accessible on the school corporation website.

Regulations or rules are often needed to implement the board’s intentions expressed in its policies by specifying a required action or describing administrative arrangements. The formulation of rules, regulations, procedures, and/or guidelines is generally the responsibility of the superintendent and/or the administrative staff. Regulations and rules may be included in the policy manual if designated as such or in a separate administrative procedures manual to be used by the school administrators.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BOARD POLICY AND REGULATIONS OR RULES

School board members need to know the difference between policy and rules. [Rules are also referred to as administrative regulations or procedures, but all serve the same function.] The National School Boards Association (NSBA) definitions for policy and regulations provide clarity on the difference between these concepts. NSBA defines policies as “guidelines adopted by the board to chart a course of action.” Well-written policies will tell *what* the board wants to see happen and will explain *why* it should happen. Policies should be broad enough to allow for discretionary action by the administration when addressing issues on a daily basis yet be specific enough to give clear guidance. NSBA defines regulations or rules as “detailed directions developed by the administration to put [board] policy into practice. They tell how, by whom, where, and when things are to be done.”

Policies should communicate the expectations of the board, give direction(s) to the superintendent, and inform the public of the board’s intent. Regulations, rules, or procedures should establish the mechanics for implementation of the policy, list the process (steps) to be followed, contain important details, and allow the superintendent to make changes.

PARAMETERS OF BOARD POLICY

The content of board policy is shaped by federal and state constitutions, federal laws and regulations, state statutes and regulations, and state and federal judicial decisions. Some policies are required to be adopted by school boards, by federal or state laws, or agency regulations. The ISBA has a list of the policies a school board is required to adopt by law.

Other than the policies required by law, the school board determines whether or not a policy is adopted based upon the local needs of the school corporation. School board members

should keep in mind that board policies carry the weight of law and establish a legal record for the school board and the school corporation. The board's policies must be current and effective, constantly monitored, and communicated and distributed to school employees, students, parents, and the school community; they should be easily accessible and conveniently located.

The policy-making process is one of the best ways to provide public involvement and to ensure policies are responsive to the needs they are designed to meet. When the board is engaging in the policymaking process, the following steps should be taken:

1. Study and Consideration;
2. Proposal and Recommendation;
3. Board Deliberation and Action;
4. Administrative Implementation and Feedback; and
5. Review of Policies.

While following these steps, the board should keep in mind policy development is a cooperative effort. Not only should the board be involved but also the appropriate stakeholders, such as administrators, employees, employee organizations, and interested members of the community. Adopting, amending, and developing policy is a continual process for the school board and school administration. A school board's policy manual is not a completed work; it is always changing with new and amended policies being added and obsolete policies being removed.

1. Study and Consideration

In this first step, the school board will begin by determining whether a policy is needed on a specific topic. One of the first questions the board should ask is how often does the board address the subject matter? If it is on a frequent basis, as in six to twelve times a year, a policy is needed. If a policy is required by state or federal law, the board has no choice but to adopt the policy.

If a board determines it needs a policy on the subject matter, it needs to research and consider its options. This is done by requesting input from the people whose activity it will affect, soliciting and obtaining ideas and views from as many people as possible, reviewing professional literature on the specific topic, and seeking advice from experts. The cooperative effort of

the board may take place by inviting the appropriate members of the school community and the public to provide input and ideas for the concepts to be included in the policy. Surrounding school corporations could be consulted to determine if and how they have addressed the issue and if they are willing to share their policy with your school board. The board should always consult with legal counsel to determine any legal considerations that need to be addressed. ISBA is a resource that can be used for any of the above information. In addition, ISBA provides upon request sample policies for a school board on requested topics.

2. Proposal and Recommendation

This step may also be referred to as the drafting stage. The entire board should not draft the policy; one person, whether a board member or an administrator, should be designated to draft the policy or be responsible for bringing a final draft to the school board for its consideration. There are many resources from which to obtain sample policies on a vast majority of topics, so it will be rare that a policy will have to be drafted from "scratch." Whether drafting a policy or reading the draft policy for the first time, the content should be void of verbosity, educational jargon, and legalese. The policy should be written clearly enough to give explicit guidance to school administrators and employees by using clear, concise, and precise language. A policy should be limited to one topic or subject matter. The policy must be consistent with board minutes and other policies. It should be practical, capable of administration, and meet the current needs of the school corporation but also have a long-range perspective. A policy should not restate a statute or rule or paraphrase a statute or rule, as a board is required to follow all laws and the regulations of a federal or state agency.

It is at this step school board policies should be given a legal review to be sure they are consistent with federal and state laws and regulations, are within the scope of the board's authority, and are clearly stated to avoid vagueness. All requirements and prohibitions in the policy should be reasonable and free from arbitrariness and capriciousness and avoid extending the school corporation's legal liability. Your local school attorney should conduct a legal review of the policies the board is considering for adoption or



amendment. ISBA may also be consulted for such a review.

3. Board Deliberation and Action

When the policy has been written and recommended for board approval, the entire board should review the policy together. The best way to do this is to have a system in place providing the entire board the opportunity to review the final policy. The most common system is to have two or three readings of the proposed policy at different public board meetings. The first reading is the opportunity for the board to read, digest, and discuss the policy. It is at this time the board may make minor changes to the policy. If the board makes major changes to the policy, it should go through the above steps before moving the policy to the next step in the adoption process.

The second or third reading of the policy is when the policy is adopted by the board. Only corrections to grammar, spelling,



or legal references should be made at this time. The board then adopts the policy by motion, a second, and a vote of the board. The adoption of policy requires a majority of the board members present. The policy should go through at least two readings, so the board has time to consider and think about the policy in between readings before adopting it.



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4. Administrative Implementation and Feedback

Once a policy is adopted, it should be placed in the policy manual, which should contain a simple, subject-related codification system using a numerical code. When a policy is adopted or amended, it should be disseminated to the persons who have policy manuals with instructions as to the appropriate placement of the policy or notification should be provided of the adopted policy. If the school corporation's policy manual is on the corporation website, it should also be updated with the newly adopted policy.

The administration is responsible for implementing the policy and for providing the school board with feedback as to how effective the policy is. At this point the development of rules or regulations for the policy should be addressed. As stated earlier, the administrators are usually responsible for drafting the rules to implement the policy. Regardless of whether the board or the administration drafts the rules, the board should review them to be sure the policy will be implemented as the board intended.

5. Review of Policy and Policy Manual

The policy manual is never a finished document; it is constantly changing. Thus, a school board is always updating its policy manual through a policy review schedule. When legislative action requires a revised or new policy, the board should act immediately and not wait for the scheduled review of the relevant chapter. Also, conditions may change within the school corporation, which may require a policy to be amended. Such events should be addressed through an established system of policy maintenance that ensures the manual is up to date and reflects the current operations of the school corporation.

During the review process, the individual policies need to be reviewed for accuracy. The following questions may be asked when reviewing a policy:

- Does the school corporation need the policy per state or federal law or regulations?
- Does the school corporation follow the policy or have circumstances changed in the corporation requiring the policy to be amended?



- Does the policy still comply with current laws or regulations?

The information resulting from asking the above questions should be shared with the board during its scheduled policy review at board meetings.

There are a variety of ways a board may review its policy manual.

The board may choose to delegate the task to a committee consisting of board members and administrators, or various administrators may be assigned to review specific chapters in the manual. The board may assign the superintendent to determine the manner the policy manual will be reviewed.

Reviewing the entire policy manual will take time. It is best to develop a three- to five-year cycle wherein all chapters in the policy manual will be reviewed by the board. At least once a month, the board should have on its agenda an item for policy review and update.

ISBA POLICY SERVICES

ISBA is prepared to provide help and guidance to board members through the policy review process. ISBA can review any policy a board is considering for adoption and will provide upon request sample policies for the school board to consider. ISBA will also distribute information, including sample policies on those required by law through this medium and/or e-mails to school board members and school superintendents. For additional information on policy development by school boards, see the following webpage: <https://www.isba-ind.org/policy.html>.

ISBA has a policy development service that provides more in-depth help to school boards on organizing and updating policies and policy manuals. For more information on this service, please see the following webpage: <https://www.isba-ind.org/cpms.html>. 📍

If you have any questions or would like a copy of any document referred to in this article, please contact Julie M. Slavens, Senior Counsel/Director of Policy Services, by phone: 317/639-4362 or by e-mail: jslavens@isba-ind.org.

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DUNELAND SCHOOL CORPORATION

Birth-to-School Program:

THE EARLY LEARNING HUB

By Dr. Chip Pettit, Superintendent, Duneland School Corporation

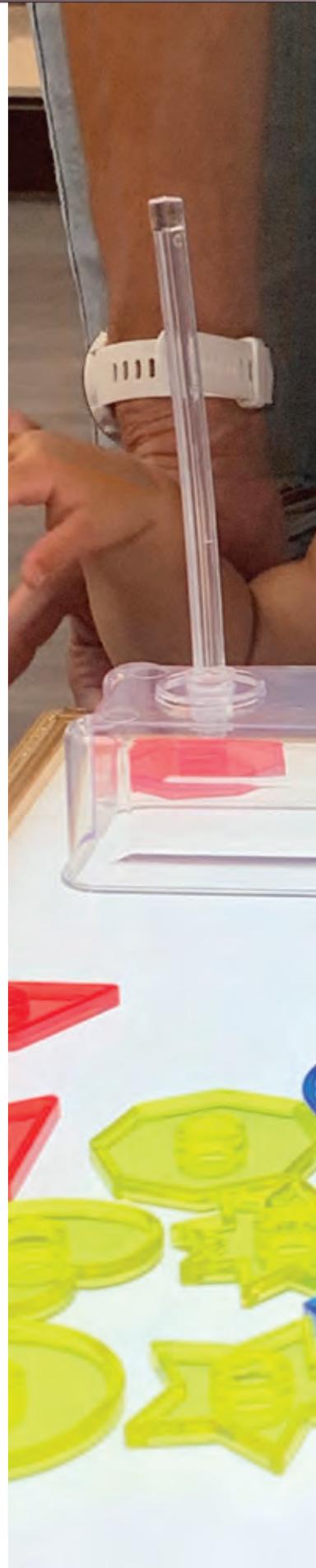


Dr. Chip Pettit
Superintendent, Duneland School Corporation

In the Spring of 2020, the Duneland School Board prioritized the development of a strategic plan to provide direction, focus, and clarity on district initiatives. A team of over 50 Duneland School Corporation (DSC) community stakeholders (board members, administration, teachers, staff, parents, students, and business owners) helped create a new four-year strategic plan that has served as a roadmap for our work together.

Now in 2023, we are well on our way to meeting our stated needs and expectations through four defined strategies outlined in the Student Achievement and Growth timeline of the DSC Strategic Plan.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the first article in a year-long series featuring Duneland School Corporation.





Over the next four issues of *The Journal*, Duneland will expand on those four developing strategies:

- **Birth-to-school program (HUB)**
- **Consistent system for teacher collaboration - Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)**
- **Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum (GVC)**
- **Equitable academic programs for all students through multi-tiered system of support (MTSS)**

EARLY LEARNING HUB BIRTH-TO-SCHOOL PROGRAM

One of Duneland's most successful and growing programs is the development of the *Early Learning HUB*. Duneland recognized that learning begins at birth and early learning is critical to the future success for children. Based on research and findings during the strategic planning process, a Birth-to-School initiative was identified as a priority and an action team was created.

In January 2022, Duneland introduced the Duneland *Early Learning HUB* to the community - a hub of resources for Duneland's 0 to 5 year old children and their caregivers. The term *HUB* refers to the program's vision - **H**elp, **U**nderstand and **B**uild connections and relationships between families, educators, and the community.

The *Early Learning HUB* resides within the Duneland School Corporation Department of Teaching and Learning, led by Director Mrs. Donna Biggs. Mrs. Biggs brings knowledge and experience from her 22 years in education as a Special Education Teacher, Dean of Students and Elementary Principal. DSC Director of Grants, Assessments and

Special Programs, Mrs. Christy Jarka, provides direct leadership and support, along with co-coordinators Mrs. Amy Curtis and Mrs. Tonia Kitchel. Mrs. Jarka brings a vast amount of tools, resources, and leadership from her 25 years of experience as a classroom teacher and Elementary Principal, while Mrs. Curtis has a masters' degree in educational policy and leadership and has eight years of experience as a classroom teacher and Mrs. Kitchel has over 20 years of experience as a school psychologist, behavioral specialist, and intake coordinator in Northwest Indiana. Dr. Mary Jane Eisenhauer serves as Duneland's Early Learning Consultant,

providing guidance and resources for best practices in early childhood curriculum and family engagement. Dr. Eisenhauer brings 25 years of experience as a kindergarten teacher, researcher, early childhood teacher, educator and advocate to the *HUB*. Prior to joining the Porter County Community Foundation in 2021 as Executive Director of First Things First Porter County, she was the Associate Director for the School of Education and Counseling at Purdue Northwest and early childhood program coordinator. Dr. Eisenhauer continues to work with national, state, and local leaders to promote high quality early childhood development. Without

question, the success in the development and implementation of Duneland's *Early Learning HUB* is due to the expertise of this very talented team of professionals boasting 100 years of combined educational experience.

HUB MISSION

The mission of Duneland's *Early Learning HUB* is to empower caregivers with knowledge, resources, and opportunities for early childhood development. The goal is to create outreach opportunities that will help children and their families build relationships, access information, foster school readiness, and increase awareness



of available resources. The program assists families in preparing their children to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally.

The *HUB* is not a preschool where families drop their children off for childcare. Instead, it is a place for caregivers and their children to learn while playing together. The *HUB* provides district families with children ages birth - 5 with opportunities to prepare for entry into formal schooling. Thoughtful planning and attention to the community's unique needs has made the *HUB* a 'go-to resource' for Duneland families.

All classes and learning opportunities are play-based. While at the *HUB*, caregivers and children can experience play and learning based on language, socialization, early literacy and numeracy concepts, self-help and exploration and discovery opportunities. The *HUB* team provides the setting and encouragement, while caregivers get to enjoy playing and learning during this special time with their child(ren). Families can choose classes that best meet their needs.

The *HUB* also offers a wide variety of developmentally appropriate and evidence-based experiences: in-person play and learn group time (Trojan Tykes), support for parents on different topics at Play and Learn Sessions (PALS), consultation and referrals to social and educational services, and online engagement such as the *HUB* virtual series. The Virtual Trojan Series has been an effective way to engage community members, including educators, public officials, and even the high school basketball team. From birth, Duneland children are welcomed into a strong community of learners, along with their

parents/caregivers, creating a strong culture to support lifelong learning.

OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE HUB

Trojan Tykes

Trojan Tykes is a one-hour learning opportunity for caregivers and their child(ren) to come to the *HUB* and experience activities that focus on literacy, play, socialization, language, and self-help skills. Families experience story and circle time, interactive center activities, and opportunities to connect with other families and children. The *HUB* coordinators guide the Tykes hour, and caregivers are in control as they learn alongside their children in fun and engaging ways. All children receive a book at the end of each session to encourage literacy development and help families build their home libraries.

Play and Learn Sessions (PALS)

PALS is a series of education events where caregivers, professionals, and community members can come together to discuss, learn, share, and question common and current early childhood topics. PALS is designed for caregivers who reside within the Duneland School Corporation boundaries and have one or more children who have not yet started school (under age 6). Expectant families are also welcome. Caregivers may include parents, grandparents, other family members, foster families, guardians, etc. Children may attend with caregivers, as appropriate activities and supervision are provided so that caregivers can attend to the information. PALS events will also be offered to Chesterton-based child care providers in the future, with topics developed specific to child care settings.

Trojans Together

Trojans Together is a quarterly evening event designed to build rapport with the community and engage families. Caregivers and their children come together to experience the *HUB* through child and caregiver led play, activities, and family engagement opportunities. Examples include Dudes at the *HUB*, Back to School, Community Partners, Library Read-In, and Winter Wonderland.

Trojan Time

On Fridays, the *Early Learning HUB* is open for families to explore and play for up to 90 minutes. The *HUB* co-coordinators are available for engagement and providing resources.

On-Demand Opportunities

Resources and interactive activities for families, such as the *HUB* Virtual Trojan Series, can be accessed 24:7 on the Duneland *Early Learning HUB* website (duneland.k12.in.us/earlylearninghub). Participants can also follow Duneland *Early Learning HUB* on Facebook and Instagram to see activities in action. Families are encouraged to join Duneland Early Learning on Remind to chat with the coordinators and receive reminders about opportunities and events.

Community Partnerships

During the first year of creating, building, and implementing the program, *HUB* co-coordinators engaged in intentional outreach efforts to generate support for the *HUB* initiatives. They attended events, held in-person and virtual meetings, shared information, and participated in media interviews. This thoughtful and purposeful planning time resulted in two kickoff events and

a full semester of successful activities for Duneland young children and families. The VIP Community Kickoff was attended by a variety of stakeholders invested in supporting the *HUB*. Support and enthusiasm for the *HUB* is evident in the continued requests from the community for meetings, tours of the *HUB*, information, and media appearances/interviews. Partnerships with several local providers and organizations are established and evolving to best meet the needs of young children and their families in the Duneland community. These community partnerships have been an integral component of the formation

and continued growth of the *HUB*. The network of resources within the community include, but are not limited to, preschools, universities, pediatricians, therapy programs, the Duneland Family YMCA, Porter County Education Foundation, Kidworks LLC, Geminus Head Start, DSC Kindergarten Team, and many more.

One unanticipated source of reciprocity and support is taking shape with the DSC Alternative School. High schoolers attending the Alternative School have been engaged in a variety of ways, including assembling classroom materials, assisting with projects, and

serving as unofficial ambassadors because of their proximity to the *HUB*. Additionally, the *HUB* has provided resources and information to the teens about health and wellness.

In collaboration with Parents As Teachers of Porter County, Duneland Schools offers the 'Ready, Set, Kindergarten' program to children who will enter kindergarten the following school year. This free program for ages 4-5 is available one day a week at each of the district's elementary schools. Together with the Porter County Education Service Center, the district has Developmental Preschool and Preschool Speech available for children ages three to Kindergarten with an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). The developmental preschool program is housed at two of the district's elementary schools. Preschool Speech, available at all the Duneland elementary schools, allows families to bring their children to one of the elementary schools for speech services.

One of the initiatives that the *HUB* is most proud of is the book giveaway. Funds were budgeted to provide each child participant with a high quality, age appropriate book after each Trojan Tykes class. This has been done with the goal of encouraging early literacy, language rich environments, and helping families build their at-home libraries. During the 2021-2022 school year, 233 books were distributed to each child for a value of almost \$1500. Grant funding received through the Duneland Education Foundation (DEF) helps to maintain the book giveaway and provides for the purchase of snacks and learning materials at the *Early Learning HUB*.

Because early childhood development affects every aspect of our community, the



HUB co-coordinator Amy Curtis teaching a Trojan Tykes class.

Thanks for all you do.

As we kick off 2023, we're celebrating School Boards, Administrators, and Staff. Thanks for all you do to enhance public education in Indiana.

We look forward to another great year of partnering with you.



Porter County Community Foundation launched First Things First Porter County in 2021 to strengthen, sustain, and nurture partnerships to promote Healthy Beginnings, Supported Families and High Quality Early Experiences. Facilitated by Dr. Eisenhauer, First Things First acts as the convener to promote collaboration and innovation. The future of Porter County's youngest citizens, the quality of life for all residents, and the economic health of the community will be impacted by this ambitious endeavor. The *HUB* was among 30 organizations who participated in Camp Collaboration, the First Things First Porter County resource fair for early care and learning agencies, providers, and practitioners. The *HUB* was able to make connections with numerous programs and services to further support DSC families.

FUNDING

Funding for Preschool Speech and Developmental Preschool is part of DSC's cooperative partnership with Porter County Education Services. For the Developmental Preschool Program, there is a nominal fee charged to families. The fees are used to pay for consumables to support classroom activities and curriculum. ESSER III dollars were allocated to fund the current structure of the early learning initiatives such as Parents-As-Teachers (Ready Set Kindergarten) and the *HUB*. The funds allowed Duneland School Corporation the opportunity to create and build the program. When funding from ESSER III is no longer available, DSC intends to utilize Education fund and Operating fund referendum dollars to sustain early

learning programs within the corporation. In addition, DSC will continue to develop partnerships with community organizations and foundations and will participate in other grant opportunities to seek additional funding to support these early learning programs.

COMING SOON

The Duneland School Corporation has a lot to celebrate when it comes to the establishment of the *Early Learning HUB*. Of note are the relationships the *HUB* has built with our future K-12 Trojans; their families; and Duneland's local community organizations, businesses, and agencies. People are interested in what the Duneland School Corporation is doing. They want to learn more about the *HUB*, what they can do to participate, and how



Left to right, Duneland Early Learning HUB Co-coordinator Tonia Kitchel; Duneland Education Foundation Executive Director Amy Redman; DSC Director of Grants, Assessments and Special Programs Christy Jarka; and HUB Co-coordinator Amy Curtis.

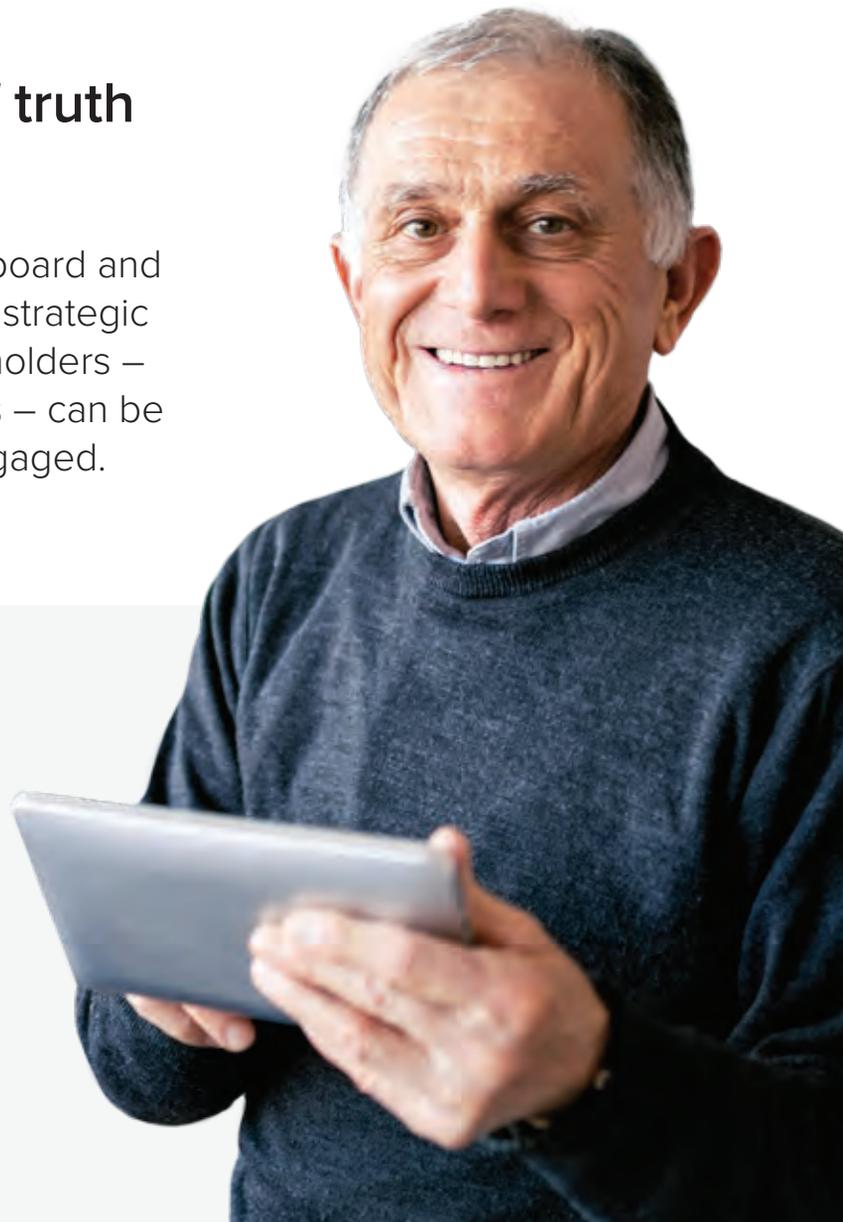
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to get involved.

Moving forward, the DSC *Early Learning HUB* will continue to expand on early learning opportunities within the community. The team will collaborate with the Department of Teaching and Learning leadership, elementary school administrators, and kindergarten teachers to increase awareness of early learning. They will continue to work in conjunction with community partners to broaden the early childhood opportunities in the Duneland School area. For example, DSC's endeavor with First Things First

Porter County and Too Small to Fail Foundation is part of the Talking is Teaching campaign. Porter County is the first community in Indiana to host this national campaign, and DSC's *HUB* has become an official member of the Talking is Teaching community, a public awareness and action campaign that aims to motivate parents and caregivers to talk, read, and sing more with their young children from birth. With the help of Talking is Teaching, the *HUB* will take part in spreading a consistent message across the community and will help

empower families to talk, read, and sing with their 0-5 year old children every day.

It is a priority of the Duneland schools to support the local community, as well as inspire the state of Indiana to create more comprehensive early childhood learning opportunities for 0-5 year olds and their families, as well as develop a more robust field of early childhood educators. There is a shortage of highly-qualified professionals who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to meet the developmental needs of young children. In an effort to expand the talent pipeline for the profession, the DSC *Early Learning HUB* will strengthen its relationships with their school partners, by hosting senior interns from the Chesterton High School (CHS) Internship Program, being guest speakers for CHS Family and Consumer Sciences Department, and welcoming Porter County high school Career and Technical Education students into the *HUB* to experience a class. Intentional engagement with high school students interested in pursuing a career in early education benefits the students as well as *HUB* programming, children and families, and the community.

In just under two years, Duneland has successfully launched a birth-to-school initiative. The demand for classes continues to exceed what was anticipated based on enrollment data. The *HUB* will continue to develop creative ways to meet the demands and interest of the community, while making the *HUB* accessible to all families. Duneland is fortunate to have a School Board that is committed to providing direction and support in this critical area and a very talented team of educators working together to build this program. 🏠



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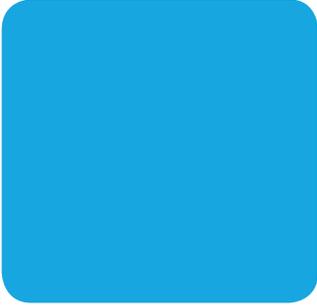


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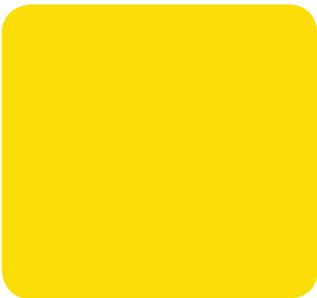
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ON THE COVER



For the cover of this issue, we selected one new school board member from each of ISBA's 10 geographical regions to highlight as the "New Faces of School Boards in Indiana". Starting in the top left corner and moving clockwise:

- **Erica Smith-Gomez**, School Town of Highland, is an attorney who works for Girls on the Run Northwest Indiana.
- **Jeff Bliler**, Elkhart Community Schools, owns a home inspection business and is a former fire department chief.
- **Stephanie Veit**, MSD of Southwest Allen County, is director of airport development for the Fort Wayne-Allen County Airport Authority.
- **Jen Valentine**, Zionsville Community Schools, is a stay-at-home mother of four and community volunteer.
- **Stacy Mopps**, Richmond Community Schools, works in human resources for a public school district in Ohio.
- **Kim Jolly**, South Ripley Community School Corporation, is the district manager of the Ripley County Soil and Water Conservation District and a third-generation school board member.
- **Dr. Judy Englert**, Greater Jasper Consolidated Schools, is a pediatric ophthalmologist.
- **Rev. Hre Mang**, Perry Township Schools, is a pastor at Falam Christian Church and is the incoming executive director of the Myanmar Baptist Churches U.S.A.
- **Kim Waldrige**, Eastern Greene Schools, is a sector specialist with Regional Opportunity Initiatives (ROI) and previously worked as an industrial engineer with General Motors.
- **Robert "Buckie" Bookhart**, Anderson Community School Corporation, is a retired physical education teacher. 🎓



2023 CALENDAR AT-A-GLANCE

FEBRUARY 21

ISBA State House Day

Indianapolis Marriott Downtown

MARCH 6

ISBA Safety & Cyber Security Seminar

Primo Banquet & Conference Center

MARCH 30-APRIL 2

COSSBA National Conference

Tampa

APRIL 1-3

NSBA Annual Conference

Orlando

MAY 1-16

ISBA Spring Regional Meetings

Statewide

JUNE 1

ISBA June School Law Seminar

Ivy Tech Conference Center

JUNE 13

ISBA/IAPSS/IASBO Budget/Finance Seminar

Ivy Tech Conference Center

AUGUST 18

ISBA/IAPSS Collective Bargaining Seminar

Ivy Tech Conference Center

SEPTEMBER 25-26

ISBA/IAPSS Fall Conference

Indiana Convention Center

NOVEMBER 1-20

ISBA Fall Regional Meetings

Statewide

DECEMBER 8

ISBA December School Law Seminar

Ivy Tech Conference Center

For more information on ISBA meetings and locations visit our website at www.isba-ind.org



COMPREHENSIVE POLICY MANAGEMENT SERVICES

ISBA MAKES POLICY MANUAL UPDATES EASY WITH COMPREHENSIVE POLICY MANAGEMENT SERVICES (CPMS). CPMS is a more robust service beyond the policy advisories from ISBA that are provided to all members.

Policy-making is a top priority of any school board’s governance responsibility. The policies put in place should comply with current Indiana and federal laws and reflect the educational values of the school corporation and the community.

ISBA is your resource for Indiana public school policy development and management. Through a yearly subscription, ISBA’s legal team can provide your school corporation with:

POLICY EVALUATION, CUSTOMIZATION, & MANUAL CODING

Review and evaluation of your current policies, full customization of policies to ensure your school corporation meets required legal mandates, and receive the ISBA policy code, tables of content, and index for organizing your local policy manual.

FOCUSED CONSULTATION

Quarterly Zoom video conferencing meetings to talk with corporation representatives about the CPMS Quarterly Report.

QUARTERLY POLICY UPDATES REPORT

Receive in depth information on policy topics and sample policies on individual topics through the Quarterly Report.

SAMPLE POLICIES AND POLICY LISTS

Receive the Required policy list & sample policies along with Essential and Discretionary policy lists as well.

POLICY TRAINING

Ensure your board and administrators are knowledgeable on current policies with policy training sessions.

“ **School corporations are complex organizations with many moving parts.** Corporations must have clear policies to guide the day to day operations in order to operate effectively. Rossville Schools have been fortunate to team up with ISBA and utilize their Comprehensive Policy Management Services (CPMS). CPMS has been instrumental in guiding Rossville School’s policy development to ensure policies are up-to-date, on point, and necessary. I have been extremely pleased with the service and hold it in high regard.”

- Dr. James Hanna, Superintendent
Rossville Consolidated Schools

“ We are very thankful to ISBA for their continued support through their policy service. Our board greatly appreciates their ability to adapt legal requirements and policy to fit the individual needs of our school district. **Their customer support and availability are remarkable and set their service apart from others.**”

- Scot D. Croner, PhD, Superintendent
Wa-Nee Community Schools

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