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# INDIANA EDUCATION INSIGHT

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## Slowly, but more healthily

*Inside litany of legislation aimed at improving student health*

While high-profile legislation worked to carve out a plan for the Hoosier state to provide mental health services during the 2023 legislative session, other measures flying largely below the radar have quietly been cobbled together over the past few legislative sessions to improve the mental and physical health of Indiana's students . . . but some have labeled the efforts a "patchwork" approach that falls short of a needed comprehensive effort reflected in this year's mental health legislative wave – HEA 1001-2023, HEA 1004-2023, HEA 1006-2023, SEA 1-2023, and SEA 4-2023.

### **Lead Testing and Reporting**

Of the legislation passed during the 2023 legislative session, HEA 1138-2023, the lead testing act authored by Rep. Carolyn Jackson (D) of Hammond that added preschools to the existing lead testing legislation, has been considered by experts as a substantial victory for school health proponents.

The measure requires the state's public finance director to prepare an annual report "that provides information on the programs of the authority under which the drinking water in schools, preschools, and child care facilities is tested for the presence of lead." More specifically, the report must contain information regarding the number of schools, preschools, and child care facilities in which drinking water has been tested for lead, the actions taken to eliminate lead contamination in drinking water at those facilities, and the funds available to conduct further testing and remediation.

"We know that is a major issue when it comes to health for kids in schools," Paramount Health Data Project co-founder and CEO Dr. Addie Angelov tells us. "Moving that back into preschool is going to be a huge win because we know at those early developmental stages when the brain is exposed to higher levels of lead in those early childhood settings it absolutely affects cognition and behavior, which we know are major game-changers for kids, especially at that age."

Indiana receives a \$2.2 million federal grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to pay for work in this realm, but Dr. Angelov notes that the state hasn't added anything to that largesse, leaving the Indiana Finance Authority to simply leverage the federal dollars.

"What we are hoping is that because we added the legislation this year without a budget line item but with a requirement that there is a report that in the next budget session we'll be able to add a line item in the budget to support those efforts," Dr. Angelov tells us looking forward.

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Sen. Scott Baldwin (R) of Noblesville was an outspoken supporter of the legislation during the second half of the session. Of particular interest to him was the notion of using state funds to pay for the installation of water filtration systems to eliminate all lead problems in schools. Don't be surprised if he takes the lead on finding a line item for this in 2025 . . . when he is likely to be a more influential internal voice on budget matters assuming he seeks re-election.

## **Medicaid Reimbursement**

A major tweak has also been made to Medicaid funding for schools.

Previously, Indiana schools could bill Medicaid for students who have special education designations, or an Individualized Education Program (IEP). Now, those services are expanded to students with a "504 plan" (referring to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, a civil rights law prohibiting disability discrimination), effective July 1, 2023, thanks to an amended state plan.

"The opening of the 504 door, for Medicaid, now means schools can bill Medicaid for 504 services, which can be for mental health services," Dr. Angelov says. "The reality is a school can give any student a 504 plan, and now that means they can open the door for mental health services without giving them a special education label, and that is a huge opportunity."

Two years ago, Rep. Martin Carbaugh (R) of Fort Wayne authored HEA 1405-2021, an act that stipulated the state "may apply to the United States Department of Health and Human Services for a state plan amendment to allow school corporations to seek Medicaid reimbursement for medically necessary, school based Medicaid covered services that are provided under federal or state mandates." According to the Family and Social Services Administration, services are now pursuant to any of the following after the expansion:

- An individualized education program (as defined in IC 20-18-2-9)
- A plan developed under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act, 29 USC 794
- A behavioral intervention plan (as defined in IC 20 -20-40-1)
- A service plan developed under 511 IAC 7-34
- An individualized health care plan

Last year Rep. Mike Karickhoff (R) of Kokomo, the speaker pro tem, authored HEA 1192-2022, an act that defined "quality provider" and "school based nurse" for the purposes of providing Medicaid-covered services in a school setting and specified conditions for Medicaid services to be provided through schools – namely that they "may only be performed

by a quality provider," "must be within the qualified provider's scope of practice," and "must be provided in accordance with this article and administrative rules concerning the Medicaid program." Indiana law also prohibits services for abortions, abortion counseling, and contraceptives from being covered.

And while the move toward reimbursements will undoubtedly increase the growing state's growing Medicaid costs – which you'll remember Senate Committee on Appropriations Chair Ryan Mishler (R) of Mishawaka publicly warned was eating into the state's K-12 budget during the latter portion of the legislative session (and has continued to caution after session's end) – some argue the increased costs are necessary.

"These are needed services to support school-based health services," Indiana School Boards Association Executive Director Terry Spradlin tells us. "And Indiana is one of the more restrictive states when it comes to school-based health services by way of Medicaid reimbursement," the former Indiana department of Education official adds. "A number of states have reimbursed for those services since it has been permitted by the federal government. These are . . . examples of what is being incorporated. Finally, Indiana is catching up with some other states in covering these types of expenses for mental health, school nurses, and school psychologists," ISBA's Spradlin adds.

## **Where We Go from Here . . . on Mental Health**

This year's budget bill and HEA 1002-2023 may prove to be another resource for schools in this arena.

Senate Committee on Education and Career Development Chair Jeff Raatz (R) of Richmond agrees that his career coaching language in HEA 1002-2023 would need to help contribute to finding a solution for the state's dismal student counselor-to-student ratio.

But Spradlin tells us the General Assembly's approach to mental health services for students has been a "patchwork" approach, and he called for a more comprehensive approach.

"I think there's a broad approach on community mental health and adult mental health, but, I think, there's less of a focus on child and adolescent mental health," Spradlin argues. "I think insufficient attention paid to child and adolescent mental health morphs into community and adult mental health [issues]."

In September 2022, the Indiana Behavioral Health Commission issued a final report cited Missouri as "[a] good parallel . . . [and] a similar state, with comparable demographics and politics to Indiana." Over a four-year period, total expenditures (including state spend and the corresponding federal matching funds) for Missouri's transition to a Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinic (CCBHC)-based Behavioral Health System required "a total increased investment of almost 60%."

Indeed, as Tim Edsell moves into his new role as superintendent of Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation, he details the critical role that schools play in student mental health issues.

Dr. Edsell, who moves from a decade at the helm of Nineveh-Hensley-Jackson United School Corporation (Indiana Creek Schools) he tells Emily Ketterer of the Johnson County Daily Journal that “it is important that we help our students who are living in a world that has a lot more challenges than it did 20, 30, 40 years ago.”

The new CPCSC leader continues, “There’s a lot more violence, there’s a lot more issues that students see both not just at home, but you know, on social media. That is disturbing. That is challenging. Not all children come from a two-parent home in a two-parent family that is, you know, going to help them, so we have to help them too. Because our job is to educate. And if their basic needs are not met, we know the research shows they’re not going to learn effectively.”

“So we’ve got to help them with their basic needs so that they can have good behavioral performance and needs met and academic needs met,” concludes Superintendent Edsell. “It’s Maslow’s Hierarchy. That’s so important to understand.”

And as superintendents, teachers, guidance counselors, and mental health professionals scope out the nature and extent of the problem (2021 polling found that 47% of Hoosier high schoolers felt persistently sad or hopeless coming out of the pandemic, the highest such rate in two decades of data collected by the High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey, and three in every 10 Indiana high school students reported that they had considered suicide) and look to help address it, the legislature has recently offered them some tools.

There are also questions about just how committed the State may be to an all-in approach.

Opposition to government intrusion killed some mental health measures proposed by Sen. Mike Crider (R) of Greenfield in previous years: we’ve told you about pushback for accepting mental health grants at Hamilton Southeastern Schools, and Dylan Peers McCoy reports Thursday for WFYI Public Media that “The Indiana Department of Education, meanwhile, quietly moved resources from a page about social, emotional and behavioral wellness off its public website – including the state’s Social Emotional Learning Toolkit. The toolkit and other materials are now posted on a portal for educators that requires users to login and enter an enrollment key.”

“We need children’s mental health to be addressed first so they have coping skills, they have their mental health needs addressed, so they graduate from high school and become

productive citizens, law abiding citizens, tax paying citizens,” ISBA’s Spradlin says. “Investing in adult mental health services – it’s too late. We could save a lot of money by investing earlier in child and adolescent mental health services. It’s going to cost more the longer we wait to address those issues and needs of Hoosier citizens.”

## IN Elementary & Secondary Ed

### IN General . . .

- The *Wall Street Journal* uses Indiana as Exhibit A in an editorial early this week to show how parents are seizing the opportunities being offered by states creating or expanding school-choice programs, writing that the data “should encourage lawmakers that robust offerings are in demand.” The *WSJ* opinion page team notes that “Indiana this year reported an increase of some 20% in its voucher program. More than 53,000 students participated in 2022-23, compared with 44,376 the previous school year, according to the state education department. Thirteen more private schools were included, bringing the total to 343. All of this was before the state made vouchers nearly universal in May by raising the income cap and removing other restrictions.”

- In their fifth year of partnership, Columbus-based Accelera™ by Cummins, the zero-emissions business segment of Cummins Inc. and Blue Bird Corporation, a manufacturer of electric and low-emission school buses, premiers the next-generation Vision electric school bus at STN Expo West in Nevada, a leading student transportation industry and technology event.

- The next-generation electric school bus features the Accelera PowerDrive 7000, the newest version of its electric powertrain system. The upgraded system provides superior performance and is equipped with a next-gen battery that has a capacity of 196kWh – a 25% increase from the previous model. With this updated battery technology, these electric school buses can now travel as far as 130 miles on a single charge.

- Accelera and Blue Bird enhance their assembly process for this new generation of electric school buses, resulting in better build quality and quicker lead times. Their goal is to deploy a fleet of 1,000 electric school buses in North America within 12 to 18 months.

- Indiana’s contract with TransAct Homeless Information Management System (TransAct HIMSS) will end on August 31, the Indiana Department of Education reminds school districts. Any schools that have used HIMSS and would like to

continue this partnership will need to fund this system in the 2023-2024 school year and beyond by including the cost of HIMSS in the McKinney-Vento subgrant budget (application opened July 28).

- The Indiana Department of Education issues a Request for Proposals for a kindergarten readiness assessment (KRA) system to provide information to educators and families about a child’s learning progression. Proposals are due September 18.

- Registering as a political action committee with the Indiana Election Division: the Carmel-based Carmel Excellence, formed for the purpose of “Supporting educational issues, and candidates supporting educational issues.” **Rachel Birenbaum**, a former district aide for U.S. Rep. **Victoria Spartz** (R), is the treasurer.

- **Keirsh Adam Cochran** (R) of Huntington, chief of campus police and security for Huntington University, opens a campaign committee or an HD 50 primary challenge to Rep. **Larissa Sweet** (R) of Huntington, who herself knocked out an incumbent in the 2022 Republican primary.

- The Metropolitan School District of Pike Township is the latest school district to alter its schedule due to the total solar eclipse coming on April 8. Pike cancels in-person classes scheduled for that day to address safety concerns, noting that the hour-long eclipse process (only four minutes are expected to be “total”) would occur during the dismissal time. Pike Township Schools will instead hold a make-up day on March 29, originally scheduled to be a flex day.

- Liberty Academy of Columbus in Columbus, a new private school, postpones its planned August 9 opening day to August 21 to “best prepare for our students and teachers,” school head **Victor “JR” Huff** tells the *Columbus Republic*, which notes that there also “appears to be some uncertainty around where the school will be located. School officials previously sought and received a use variance from the Columbus Board of Zoning Appeals to locate the academy at 101 National Road in Columbus Township, which is zoned for Industrial: Light. The board approved the request in late May. When asked about the status of building preparations, Huff said that the school was planning to use a different site for its initial launch. ‘We’re looking to enter into a short-term facilities usage agreement with a local church to basically use some of their space to launch while we’re waiting for the preparation of 101 (National Road),’ he said,” but claimed “he was not at liberty to disclose

the name of the church as the agreement was still under attorney review. When asked if Liberty Academy still planned to use the National Road facility as a school eventually, he said that was still the plan. He was unsure how long they would be at the temporary location due to factors such as construction schedules and legal steps that would need to be taken at the National Road property. However, Huff later told *The Republic*, ‘After our conversation the other day I realized that we still have a very fluid situation with our facility and would prefer that it wasn’t included in any discussion about Liberty at this time. I may have a different answer for you next week, but for right now I would like any discussion about 101 (National Road) omitted from a story.’”

- The paper notes that a city-county planning department staff report indicates “that even with variance approval, there would be more work to do before the National Road facility was ready to open as a school,” including a state review for change of use of the structure under the Indiana Building Code.

- A Wallethub analysis concludes that Indiana has the nation’s worst early education system in America, ranking lowest among all 50 states and the District of Columbia with a score of 22.27 on a scale in which 100 is the highest possible score; the state ranking 50th managed to post a score of 33.84. Indiana ranks dead last nationally in the key metric of access (note that As of this month, a Hoosier family of four earning \$45,000 or less per year will be able to access free, state-funded preschool), 30th in program quality, 41st in resources and economic support, 43rd in pre-K program growth 46th in total reported spending per child enrolled, and 47th in share of 3-and-4 year olds enrolled. The study is based on 12 metrics.

- Across the state, 1,384 teaching positions remained open on the Indiana Department of Education’s School Personnel Job Board as of August 3 – about one week after schools in Marion County opened for the year – but a dramatic decline from almost one year prior, when more than 2,300 openings were posted in mid-July 2022. In the weeks leading up to the start of the 2022-23 school year, you’ll recall the total number of open teaching positions in the state had been slowly decreasing, but the number of open positions had stagnated at close to 1,500, though the total dipped below 1,400 for the first time in many months at the start of February . . . however, it has shot up since, with a slight downturn in the last few weeks. Note that IDOE does not maintain comparable data for prior



years. In the meantime, we have begun tracking the number of open teaching positions in the state, using the IDOE School Personnel Job Board (we've started updating the table every two weeks for brevity):

Week	Total teaching position openings	Early Child teaching openings	Elementary Teaching position openings	Middle School teaching position openings	High School teaching position openings
08/03	1,384	135	315	329	510
07/20	1,721	152	377	380	645
07/06	1,808	158	388	419	670
06/22	1,961	173	431	453	760
06/08	2,068	163	442	471	809
05/11	2,033	171	445	466	814
04/27	1,828	162	402	417	745
04/13	1,682	161	385	378	674
03/30	1,716	168	423	399	690
03/16	1,604	146	363	357	662
03/02	1,422	134	344	343	588
02/16	1,427	125	364	379	571
02/02	1,396	128	358	373	552
01/20	1,519	117	390	382	540
01/05	1,500	110	382	374	517
12/01	1,490	107	381	368	496
11/17	1,515	110	382	377	508
11/03	1,494	102	386	386	488
10/27	1,570	107	383	401	510
10/20	1,561	107	384	395	503
10/13	1,569	105	382	391	509
10/06	1,544	101	379	384	489
09/29	1,575	107	401	381	487
09/22	1,566	110	408	390	489
09/15	1,539	110	390	388	492
09/08	1,551	111	391	381	489
09/01	1,572	108	385	392	493
08/25	1,601	104	391	393	503
08/18	1,662	113	420	394	523
08/11	1,750	116	437	414	558
08/05	1,888	118	446	440	604
07/28	2,156	145	488	489	722
07/21	2,305	147	518	510	783
07/14	2,398	153	525	540	813

## IN Budgets & Finance . . .

- The School City of Hammond school board approves an agreement between Morton High School and local radio and streaming broadcaster **Jim Dedelow's** JEDtv to broadcast MHS athletic events. Under the approved arrangement, the district will earn \$10 per subscriber.

- Plymouth Community School District school board members were updated by Director of Food Services **Amy Kraszyk** about of \$10,709.47 in negative lunch account balances for the 2022-23 school year reports **Kathy Bottorff** for WTCA 105-AM in Plymouth. She relates that “Students with a negative balance were 128 which is less than 1% of

our total enrollment.” “Kraszyk explained that school year 2022-23 was the first year that COVID waivers were revoked and the first time in 2 years that families went back to paid lunches. She said, ‘While most families were aware of the change back to normal, others weren’t and did not complete an updated free/reduced application.’” Students with a negative balance are granted a reimbursable meal. “Kraszyk said some of the negative account balances are as low as \$20. Her plan is to offer parents one last opportunity to reconcile the meal account balances through the schools. If the corporation can’t resolve the debt with the family or they do not respond then the corporation will be forced to go to another form using a collection agency or small claims court.”

- The Batesville High School and Milan High School varsity football teams dedicate their respective 2023 seasons to Turnover Hunger in all five elementary schools serving Ripley County. Turnover Hunger is a program supported by the Ripley County Community Foundation that accepts donations or pledges for every turnover that the Milan and/or Batesville varsity football teams force in their games during the 2023 season. Participants pledge a dollar amount for every turnover forced, or make a flat donation in support of each team’s effort.

- At the end of the season, all pledges will be collected and donations will be granted to Batesville Primary School, Jac-Cen-Del Elementary School, Milan Elementary School, South Ripley Elementary School, and Sunman Elementary School. The grant dollars are used to support the Weekend Back Sack Program which provides elementary school students who suffer from severe food insecurity (those children who are deemed to be the most in need by the school) with a backpack of kid-friendly, nonperishable food for the weekend. According to the Indiana County Data Book, 690 children in Ripley County are food insecure; which means that they do not know when they will have their next meal, and 22% of those children live in households that do not qualify for Federal and State Nutrition Programs, thereby further limiting a child’s access to food.

- The Hamilton Southeastern Schools will run a deficit of just shy of \$1 million as a result of having to pick up the tab for textbooks and materials under a new state law. HSE officials briefed the school board on the new math, and, according to the community news website LarryInFishers.com, board members learned that “student fees invoiced in the 2022-2023 school year totaled roughly \$4.1 million, with estimated fee reimbursement from the state to be about \$3.2 million in the coming school year, leaving a local deficit of a bit below \$1 million. The student fee amount is from the previous school year and the amount of state support is estimated, so the actual numbers are not known at this time. The official student count will impact the state fee reimbursement, with the state paying \$151.88 per student. The official student count is submitted to the state in October.”

- Evansville Reitz Memorial High School receives a \$1.1 million donation from the Koch Foundation to be distributed across five years, to support initiatives in the school’s 2022-2025 “Igniting the Tradition” Strategic Plan. The pledge is the school’s largest in more than a century.
- Toyota Indiana celebrates the start of production of the first-ever Grand Highlander SUV in Princeton this week with a five-year, multi-million-dollar commitment to help create what it characterizes as “limitless possibilities for Indiana schools.” The Toyota USA Foundation unveils Driving Possibilities grants of up to \$11.1 million to prepare students for future science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) careers. Driving Possibilities focuses on Pre-K-12 education “to ensure all students have access to rewarding careers, including opportunities in the auto industry.”
  - The initial funds will be distributed through Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation, the North Gibson School Corporation, Building Blocks, and Youth First Inc. to provide access to quality Pre-K education, resources to support student mental health, multi-language learning, and hands-on STEM programs for students and teachers.
- The Mind Trust, an Indianapolis-based education nonprofit, awards a total of \$1.69 million in capacity building awards to four high-performing K-12 and adult charter school networks. Christel House DORS, Circle City Prep, The Excel Center, and Herron Classical Schools will receive funding to support the growth of each network through launching new campuses or expanding current ones.
  - ➔ Christel House DORS – \$240,000 to help support costs for the first year of its northwest adult high school campus.
  - ➔ Circle City Prep – \$250,000 to support the growth of the current campus and the network’s expansion plan.
  - ➔ The Excel Center – \$200,000 to support the initial costs of opening its new campus during its first year.
  - ➔ Herron Preparatory Academy – \$1 million to support Herron Preparatory’s facility expansion and kickstart plans for additional network growth.
- Expect the Bluffton-Harrison Metropolitan School District to go to market soon for \$10 million in bonds to support district construction projects.
- Recent and forthcoming bond issues include:
  - ... ≈ July 24 – [Tell City-Troy Township School Building Corporation](#) Ad Valorem Property Tax First Mortgage Bonds, Series 2023N, \$5,815,000, with Mesirow Financial as lead advisor ...

## IN Contracts & Compensation . . .

- According to the community news website LarryInFishers, “A change in state law will not change the relationship between the Hamilton Southeastern (HSE) Schools administration and the HSE Education Association (the teachers representative). Superintendent **Yvonne Stokes** says with the change in law that says schools districts now have the option of discussions with the local teacher unions, HSE Schools will continue its policy of discussions with HSEA, with no change.” Superintendent Stokes explains that “We, as a district, believe in the importance of hearing the voice of our teachers,” the website reports. “While the option is a ‘may,’ we plan to have discussions,” she adds.
- We began covering for you the saga of Richard Sopko and **William Pfister** back in 2016, but we’ve not written anything about it in the past three years. You may recall the star-crossed case of the two retired school Town of Munster school superintendents whom the State Board of Accounts and Office of the Attorney General (under assorted attorneys general) contend should repay taxpayers a combined \$851,451.35 in retirement account overpayments and audit costs under contracts OAG contends were illegal but which the retired administrators claim were authorized by contract, and approved and disbursed publicly by the school board. *State ex rel. Hill v. Travelers Casualty & Surety Co. of America, et al.*, No 45C01-1705-PL-000051. This unique case has survived numerous procedural permutations, with Lake County Circuit Court Judge **Marissa McDermott** (D) initially dismissing the matter over a statute of limitations issue, only to have a subsequent Indiana Supreme Court ruling that the discovery rule does not apply to claims for recovery of public funds revive the claim against the Munster retirees, and return the matter to Judge McDermott. And to confuse things even more, Sopko died late last year, and the state is seeking repayment from his widow and personal representative of his estate.
  - After two years of scores of assorted technical motions and substantive filings by both sides, Judge McDermott weighed back in during July with an order granting partial summary judgment for the ex-supers, siding with them on two of three outstanding issues. In a 28-page ruling, Judge McDermott finds that summary judgment for the defendants is justified on the State’s claim that the retirees “deviated from the plain reading of their contracts,” as well as on “the State’s claim that they acted unlawfully in relation to the genesis of the contract language, either by ‘directing’ or ‘insisting’ that the language be included, or otherwise.” The final remaining state claim – that the two “were paid ‘without the School Town Board’s knowledge’ in a manner that constituted recompensable misconduct on their part,” remains pending . . . with a status hearing slated for January 25, 2024.



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 **Performance** Services

□ As we explained seven years ago in these pages, the SBOA audit report called for retired superintendent Pfister to reimburse the school district \$463,922 and for retired assistant superintendent Sopko to repay \$377,475 in supplemental retirement funds paid by the district to annuity accounts controlled by each of the men in addition to their regular pay, Indiana Public Retirement System benefits, and other benefits. Pfister's contract called for him to be paid "each year an additional 4% toward an annuity of his choice." Pfister contends that the contract language was written specifically to have the benefit compound, as an incentive to stay employed with the school corporation. By the time Pfister retired at the end of the 2012 school year, the benefit had compounded to the point where he received 38% of his salary toward an annuity, or \$72,802. The State Board of Accounts contends that the annuity benefit should not have compounded, and as such, the benefit should have been calculated at four percent, for a total of \$7,100.

□ **Dan Carden** of the *Times of Northwest Indiana*, who has also chronicled the case since its inception, offers a solid summary of Judge McDermott's latest findings and justification.

The attorney general claimed such high payments on behalf of the superintendents were illegal because the plain meaning of the contracts suggest the "plus each year" 4% (or 3%) supplemental annuity payment merely meant a 4% payment in each year of the three-year contracts, which actually were renewed on a yearly basis, not an annually increasing annuity contribution.

McDermott said the attorney general's argument failed on this point because the meaning of the contract is anything but plain as the State Board of Accounts, which conducted the retroactive audit of the school district, and even the attorney general's office at times, acknowledged the contract is unclear when it comes to cumulative percentage versus yearly percentage.

"On its face, the provision is subject to more than one interpretation," McDermott said. "Further, there is undisputed designated evidence that supports the (superintendents') reading of ambiguous contractual language. Therefore, this court believes the (superintendents) are correct – there was no 'plain reading' from which the (superintendents) could 'deviate.'"

McDermott also was unpersuaded by the attorney general's assertion that the superintendents unlawfully forced the annuity language into their contracts, since she said the record clearly shows the contracts were a product of negotiation and bargaining between the superintendents and the school board.

"There is nothing unlawful about 'requesting' or even 'insisting' upon the inclusion or amendment of a term within a freely negotiated contract. However, to the extent that

the state would argue otherwise, the testimony of various participants in the process, including both Pfister and prior school board members, confirms that the process was a collaborative give-and-take," McDermott said.

## *IN Programs & Curriculum . . .*

- The Indiana Department of Education launches an upgraded version of the Ed-Fi technology and data standard for the 2023-2024 school year. School personnel and their vendors have been participating in training and will continue to be trained in the weeks ahead. While the changes in this upgrade will be transparent to schools, IDOE expresses confidence that the state will benefit from the litany of improvements to the data standard which have occurred since Ed-Fi was first implemented in the 2019-2020 school year. These changes include improvements in the data model and increased efficiencies in the Ed-Fi technology platform.

- The Eastern Pulaski School Corporation School Board moves forward with a new "community ambassador" program that will offer district parents and other community members an opportunity to participate in a six-session academy. That program is intended to offer participants a more detailed look at district operations, including sessions focused on school finance and budgeting; operations; facility improvements; curriculum and instruction; and student services and testing.

□ Expect 15 applicants to be selected for participation in the fall semester cohort.

- Revisiting a controversial decision, the Rensselaer Central Schools Corporation school board votes 4-3 not to grant a request from Lifewise Academy "to take Van Elementary students out of class for an hour of Bible instruction," with the *Rensselaer Republican* reporting that "While many agreed with Lifewise's mission, several felt it should not interfere with school time. They feel religious instruction is better suited before or after school hours .... Many of the elementary school's teachers were also against dismissing students during school time, even though the time missed would be during an elective hour such as computer lab time .... There is also the potential for liability if a student is injured away from school during school hours and Lifewise officials were unclear on where classes would be held away from school, though they had a couple of options."

- Washington Community Schools plan to expand professional development time for staff by starting schools two hours later on eight Wednesdays, one Wednesday per month except for December and May, to allow more time for staff professional development. On these dates, classes will begin two hours later than usual, with all schools moving to the two-hour weather



delay protocol under which buses will pick up students two hours later than usual. Breakfast and lunch services will remain unchanged.

- Elkhart Community Schools secondary schools will begin their school day one hour later on Mondays this year to allow more professional development time for ECS staff. Dismissal times will remain unchanged. Monday bus pickup will be delayed by one hour for the affected students. Should a two-hour weather delay fall on a Monday, schools will operate on the regular two-hour delay schedule.

- The Southwest Allen County Schools school board is reviewing a proposal backed by Superintendent **Park Ginder** under which the Foundation Against Intolerance and Racism (FAIR) would conduct six 90-minute listening sessions to address diversity and inclusion issues—in September or October at the latest—for \$10,000,” reports **Ashley Sloboda** for the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*. “FAIR would also provide staff with professional development that would provide unity-building strategies and introduce district leaders to FAIR’s approach to diversity and common humanity. Ginder said those activities would happen as early as November or December and cost \$7,000.” Sloboda reminds readers that “The predominantly white, 7,800-student district has been seeking outside guidance since race concerns escalated Feb. 9 in demonstrations and discussions that disrupted classes at Homestead High School.”

- The Duneland Early Learning Hub will partner with Duneland School Corporation to expand Duneland Y Preschool preschool classes to the Chesterton community at the Trojan Learning Center in Chesterton Middle School, the district’s early learning center.

□ The schedule, reports the *Times of Northwest Indiana*, will see Duneland Y Preschool provide “half-day classes for children ages 3 to 5 at the early learning center. There will be Pre-K classes that will run Monday through Friday in the morning from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. and in the afternoon from 12:15 to 3:15 p.m. In addition, the YMCA will offer Monday, Wednesday, Friday classes for children ages 4 to 5 years old, and Tuesday, Thursday classes for children aged 3 years old. Those classes will run from 8:30 to 11:30 a.m. The half-day classes will follow the Duneland School Corp.’s school year calendar with classes starting Aug. 16 and ending on May 30, 2024.”

- Northwestern School Corporation in Howard County plans to house small general education preschool classroom at Howard Elementary School beginning this fall, looking to satisfy individualized education programs (IEPs) for its special education preschool population, and accommodating about 10 students.

- Look for the Michigan City Area Schools to release the district’s new strategic plan addressing the next five years later this month after spending the year to date of assembling data and hosting community input sessions.

## IN Policy . . .

- Consolidating a pair of cases from Martinsville and Terre Haute, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit on Wednesday affirms a pair of preliminary injunctions ordering school districts in those two communities to allow three boys who are transgender “to use the boys’ bathrooms at their schools.” *A.C. v. Metro. Sch. Dist. of Martinsville*, No. No. 22-1786; *B.E. v. Vigo Co. Sch. Corp.*, No. 22-2318. The lower court injunctions were granted, respectively, by Chief Judge **Tanya Walton Pratt** (an Obama appointee) and Judge **James R. Sweeney, II** (a Trump appointee). In the ruling, the Seventh Circuit judges explain that they will rely upon—and not revisit—their own circuit’s precedent.

□ As the appellate court explains, The boys sued the districts and the school principals, alleging sex discrimination in violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The boys also requested preliminary injunctions that would order the schools to grant them access to the boys’ bathrooms and, in the case of B.E. and S.E., access to the boys’ locker rooms when changing for gym class. The district courts in both cases granted the preliminary injunctions, relying on our decision in *Whitaker ex rel. Whitaker v. Kenosha Unified School District No. 1 Board of Education*, 858 F.3d 1034 (7th Cir. 2017). In this consolidated appeal, the school districts invite us to reverse those preliminary injunctions and revisit our holding in *Whitaker*. We see no reason to do so, however. Litigation over transgender rights is occurring all over the country, and we assume that at some point the Supreme Court will step in with more guidance than it has furnished so far. Until then, we will stay the course and follow *Whitaker*. That is just what the district courts did, in crafting narrowly tailored and fact-bound injunctions. We affirm their orders.”

□ If you want to delve deeper into the ruling, you might also want to check out the concurring opinion—and particularly the final paragraph—from Judge **Frank Easterbrook**, a Reagan appointee who has served on the court since 1985, and the judge whom the late Justice Antonin Scalia said publicly he hoped would replace him on the Supreme Court of the United States (we’ve omitted some internal citations):

Given *Whitaker v. Kenosha School District*, 858 F.3d 1034 (7th Cir. 2017), this is an easy case for the plaintiffs. I am no more disposed than my colleagues to overrule *Whitaker*. A conflict among the circuits will exist no matter what happens in the current suits. The Supreme Court or Congress could

produce a nationally uniform approach; we cannot. I concur only in the judgment, however, because, although I admire my colleagues' thoughtful opinion, they endorse Whitaker, while I think that *Adams v. St. Johns County School Board*, 57 F.4th 791 (11th Cir. 2022) (en banc), better understands how Title IX applies to transgender students.

My colleagues express confidence that Title VII (the subject of *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 140 S. Ct. 1731 (2020)) and Title IX use "sex" in the same way. The majority in *Adams* was equally confident of the opposite proposition. I am not so sure about either view. Title IX does not define the word, which can refer to biological sex (encoded in a person's genes) or to social relations (gender). Sex is such a complex subject that any invocation of plain meaning is apt to misfire. I think, however, that *Adams* is closer to the mark in concluding that "sex" in Title IX has a genetic sense, given that word's normal usage when the statute was enacted.

Indiana has elected to use a social definition rather than a genetic one; the state's judiciary has entered orders classifying all three plaintiffs as boys. Like my colleagues I'm puzzled that the school districts did not act on the logical implication of these orders. Much of life reflects social relations and desires rather than instructions encoded in DNA. Nurture and nature both play large roles in human life. Classifying as "boys" youngsters who are socially boys (even if not genetically male) is an act of kindness without serious costs to third parties. But if Title IX uses the word "sex" in the genetic sense, then federal law does not compel states to do this.

- The North Montgomery Community School Corporation approves a policy change that will allow home-schooled students to enroll in classes, rendering them eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities, including FFA and sports.
- In a July 19 informal advisory opinion, Indiana Public Access Counselor **Luke Britt** takes to task the Evansville-Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) school board over how that body has chosen to conduct business. Counselor Britt addresses a question regarding school consolidation and the level of discussion required before a final determination, and a second one concerning the appropriate items for a consent agenda.

□ The complainant had learned EVSC was closing a high school, but was unaware of any prior public discussion of this action by the board, and also could not ascertain

whether the topic had been a basis for an executive session. The complainant questioned the legality of a school building being closed without discussion at a public meeting. Based on information provided to the PAC office, the board did not mention the closure "on any agenda, minutes, executive session notice or memoranda. From an outside perspective, the closure seemingly came from nowhere and manifested in a resolution on a consent agenda after the announcement had been made earlier in the year." Counselor Britt notes statutory criteria to consider, staff reassignment, disbursement of portions of the student body, and financial ramifications for the move.

Inexplicably, EVSC appears to downplay the significance of the move, passing it off as a merely 'staffing issue.'

To categorize a building closure as a perfunctory administrative or internal issue is disingenuous at best. While particulars may be handled by the superintendent and its staff, school boards should be publicly considering matters of any significant import to the extent practicable. Notably, some, but not all facility issues can be discussed in executive session, but only preliminarily so and for strategic purposes.

Here, the only evidence of any mention of the closure whatsoever can be found in the May 30, 2023, meeting minutes describing the resolution as an "IDOE State School Number Change." This was also on a consent agenda devoid of context.

Based on the information provided, there is no objective indication that EVSC ever intended to put the public on notice of the action or explain the decision whatsoever. If public discussion of building closures is not important enough to the Board to address substantively at a meeting, one wonders what else it artificially suppresses."

- Second, Counselor Britt addresses the propriety of several items on a consent agenda, noting one board agenda as an example that contains items such as fund transfers, approval of grant proposals, purchase agreements for electronic equipment, and contract approvals, among other items.

As a practical matter, it is not necessary for a governing body to discuss every issue at length. School boards usually do not micromanage the daily business of a school corporation. Instead, boards set policy, drive innovation, set parameters on spending, and put the people in place to execute their vision.



Controlling routine duties on a granular level would amount to poor management and governance (as well as marathon meetings). Therefore, a governing body’s use of a consent agenda for approving routine business is not prohibited by the Open Door Law. Additionally, this office does not believe that consent agendas are antithetical to transparency.

Consent agendas for board meetings can be a useful tool for disposing of routine matters of ongoing, yet insubstantial, consequence without setting them apart as separate agenda items. Consent agendas can streamline meetings and trim unnecessary formal procedures. Approval of minutes, claims under existing contracts, payroll, or other routine ministerial tasks can certainly be placed on a consent agenda.

Other matters of import, however, should have their own bullet points on an agenda with discussion, motions, and votes, if necessary. While the law does not specify what items require heightened attention, a good practice would be to separate routine issues from those about which a reasonable member of the public would be curious.

Distinguishing between what is and is not a routine matter is largely fact sensitive. As noted earlier, however, closing of buildings within a school district is largely a matter of substance which warrants its own entry on an agenda. The same would be true of significant personnel decisions, new contracts, non-routine expenditures, delegations of authority, etc.

Some of the items that the EVSC Board seemingly passes on a consent agenda are not objectively routine or standard at all. It would be well served to reevaluate its procedure in this regard and adjust accordingly.

- In our last issue, we told you that producers of the student play *Marian, Or the True Tale of Robin Hood* that Carroll High School administrators canceled, filed a detailed Open Records Act request seeking to learn precisely why the production was blocked. Following the cancelation, students independently produced the play thanks to a crowd-sourced funding campaign that raised some \$85,000, underwriting a late May sold-out performance at Fort Wayne’s Foellinger Theatre.

- School administrators have denied the records request, and the Carroll High School students involved now say that they plan to appeal the denial through channels.

- Richmond Community Schools plans a major focus this year on attendance. RCS school board member **Kristen Brunton** tells WQLK *Kicks 96* FM in Richmond: “We have a huge push for attendance and thinking about students and how do we get them to school every day.” According to the latest attendance numbers from the Indiana Department of Education, “34% of elementary students in Richmond are chronically absent.”

- Rep. **Chris Jeter** (R) of Fishers, representing Indiana Classical Schools Corporation, files the appellant’s brief in the appeal of a Hamilton County Superior Court ruling against his client in an interpretation of the state’s so-called §1 law, which requires public school corporations to make unused buildings available multi-discipline design firm to charter schools for a sale price or annual lease of \$1. *Indiana Classical Schs. Corp. v. Carmel Clay Sch. Bd. of Trusts.*, No. 23A-PL-00840. As Jeter frames the issue:

Specifically, this case seeks review of the trial court’s interpretation of the word “use” and its analysis of the 2019 amendments to Indiana Code § 20-26-7.1 regarding whether the General Assembly relaxed or narrowed the law’s requirements and scope. CCSB’s repeated expressed desire to circumvent the law also invites a review as to whether its failure to notify Appellant Indiana Classical Schools Corporation d/b/a Valor Classical Academy (“Valor”), a known interested charter school, rendered its reasons for non-compliance pretextual and/or whether CCSB violated the spirit and intent of Indiana Code § 20-26-7.1 with its actions.

- We’ve removed some internal citations in presenting the gist of the Indiana Classical Schools appeal:

The trial court erroneously entered summary judgment for CCSB because CCSB failed to make the applicable notifications despite having taken several of the “official actions” identified in the Dollar Law prior to its closure of Orchard Park, which included: (1) the passage of a resolution on June 25, 2018 that directed the closure of Orchard Park at the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year; (2) the act of ceasing all of classroom instruction at Orchard Park at the conclusion of the 2020-2021 school year; (3) not re-opening Orchard Park to classroom instruction at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year; (4) the passage of a resolution to partner with the City of Carmel Parks Department to explore non-educational uses for the building; and (5) the passage of a resolution to renovate and lease a small portion of Orchard Park to a daycare facility, to demolish the remaining portion, and to construct a new facility for use by the CCSB maintenance department.

The trial court also erred when it found that CCSB’s continued “use” of the empty building for storage and training exempted the school from the notice requirements of the Dollar Law based upon the General Assembly’s expanded notification requirements in the 2019 Amendments. This error is evidenced – not only by the plain language and intent of the law – but by CCSB’s numerous actions and statements which indicated an intent to skirt the law. Accordingly, the trial court’s errors warrant a reversal of summary judgment in favor of CCSB and against Valor.

- Indianapolis Public Schools is claiming an exemption from the state’s “\$1 law,” reports **Amelia Pak-Harvey** for Chalkbeat Indiana. The IPS school board “voted unanimously to authorize officials to begin the sales process for Raymond Brandes School 65 and Francis Bellamy School 102, two of the six schools that closed at the end of the 2022-23 school year as part of the district’s Rebuilding Stronger reorganization. But the district will only consider transferring the properties to another government agency or selling them to a nonprofit organization for the first 30 days of the process before opening up the sales to other buyers.” She explains that “The state’s so-called \$1 law in general requires districts to make such buildings available to charter schools or state educational institutions for a sale price or annual lease of \$1. But IPS maintains that changes to the statute that lawmakers approved earlier this year mean the law does not apply to its sale of the two facilities. That interpretation of the law has garnered pushback from charter supporters. The district’s argument underscores an ongoing conflict between IPS, charters, and GOP officials over the best way to use and reallocate school facilities as IPS enrollment declines and the district looks to shore up its finances.”

- The newly amended \$1 law “exempts districts from having to sell or lease closed buildings to charters if they split funding equally from voter-approved property tax increases for operating or safety costs with ‘applicable charter schools.’ In 2021, the IPS school board voted to share funds from its 2018 property tax increase with charters in its Innovation Network of ‘autonomous schools,’” and Chalkbeat notes that the IPS “resolution cited that revenue-sharing to argue that it is exempt from having to sell or lease its closed buildings to charters for \$1. ‘In 2023, there were significant modifications to the so-called dollar law that we believe exempt IPS from’ the statute, the district said in a statement after the vote. ‘Our legal team will continue to engage in the analysis and implications moving forward.’ But Sen. **Linda Rogers**, a Republican and the author of the change to the \$1 law, previously told Chalkbeat that the exemption would not cover IPS just because the district had shared funds from a previous referendum. Instead, she argued, the exemption only covers districts that share such revenue with charters through measures that voters approve this year or in subsequent years. (In fact, under a separate state law, IPS and other Marion County school districts will be required to split revenue in this way with charters for any future ballot question that voters pass.)” and the Indiana Charter School Network agrees with the Rogers interpretation.

- “Controversy is surrounding the School City of Hammond’s new cellphone policy,” reports **Adrian Martinez-De La Cruz** for the *Times of Northwest Indiana*. In June, the school board approved revisions to the student handbook that include “a complete ban on cellphone use within school buildings. Students will have to turn off and put away their cellphones during school hours and will not be allowed to

have them in the classrooms. Elementary students will have their cellphones collected by their teachers, while middle school and high school students will be expected to store their phones in their lockers. According to Superintendent **Scott Miller**, cellphone use was the number one complaint from teachers during the past school year, and they asked it to be addressed. And he believes students just don’t need their phones in school. “Students are immature,” Miller told *The Times*. “They don’t have the self-control adults have. . . . So why are we equipping them with devices that just sometimes throw things in their face that they’re not able to process?”

- In July we followed for you some of the controversy over the Hamilton Southeastern Schools school board looking at changes to the district’s dress code, which, if approved, some had expected to be delayed until the 2024-25 school year given the timing of the proposed policy change and suggestions from some community members to allow for more feedback. “There has been discussion not just about the language in the proposed handbook changes, but also the process used,” reports the community news website LarryInFishers.com. “In the past, a committee of ‘stakeholders,’ comprised of staff, parents and students, recommended changes in the student handbook months before the start of the school year. These changes were proposed by board members outside that process. **Carolyn Porzuczek**, Elementary Schools Vice President for the Hamilton Southeastern Education Association, urged board members to ‘value’ the process for parents, staff and students to evaluate changes in the handbook language, a system that normally begins in January for the next school year. She voiced concerns about a changing dress code that would require teachers to have intimate conversations with students about their clothing, saying it ‘further erodes the trust’ teachers have in their role as decision-makers.” “We’ve stated over and over again that positive relationships are built on trust,” Porzuczek told the board.

- HSE Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer **Nataki Pettigrew**, “expressed concerns from district administrators, teachers, parents and students about the new policy on hoodies and hats, saying none of the stakeholders expressed concerns over the current policy, which allows teachers the autonomy to deal with the issue,” the website noted. “We have experienced an entire year allowing students to wear hats and hoods without any disruption to the learning environment,” Pettigrew told board members. “I thought it was fair if we’re not going to honor the process that I at least honor the words of our staff and administrators,” she said. “Going back on this policy sends a confusing message to our students and our staff and will be a very difficult sell.” Pettigrew echoed Porzuczek’s earlier comments in which she said “There’s a process that we follow, as far as getting all the stakeholder’s input. The committee, as well as the association



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with families and students, have been working since January to start this process. It has gone through every building, and we've had surveys. Recommendations were made a couple of weeks ago. The change now has not gone through that process," Porzuczek told the board.

□ Nevertheless, after only perfunctory discussion, the HSE board approved (on a 5-2 vote) some controversial changes to the dress code that will apply in the 2023-24 school year that will include a prohibition under most circumstances of clothing or accessories "displaying messages or images not appropriate for school," hats, "Heavy and/or long coats," raised hoods, Strapless tops or spaghetti-straps, and "Clothing that is designed to reveal buttocks, torso (the body apart from the head, neck, arms, and legs), midsection of the body, undergarments, or the lack of undergarments." Female students will not, however, be required to don slips or shorts under dresses and skirts as had earlier been proposed. New board member "**Tiffany Pascoe** says she wants a discussion about school uniforms after the referendum vote later this year."

□ The two board members who voted against the change said they were doing so because of the concern that proper procedures weren't followed, reports **Jessica Gruenling** for WRTV-TV in Indianapolis. "President **Dawn Lang** says the surveys were never brought to the board's attention. 'I think there's many processes in place. Over the last 100 days, we've had four meetings in front of the public and work sessions, so it's been very clear what our interests were and what changes and updates we wanted to see in the handbook policy. It's been noted. It's nothing we've hidden from. It's something we've been vocal about for quite a while and as a school board, we have the authority to provide those updates," Lang said.

• Months after a Lafayette School Corporation "school board member, elected on an anti-'woke' platform, caused a stir by demanding that teachers compile lists of every book in the district's libraries and all classrooms, LSC has started to meet him partway on his request," reports **Dave Bangert** in his *Based in Lafayette, Indiana* Substack newsletter. He explains that "LSC posted a spreadsheet of more than 128,000 titles – from picture books to classic novels – available in its 11 school libraries. And the district's administration started uploading an inventory of textbook curriculum for each of its schools, with elementary and intermediate school lists going up last week for reading and writing curriculum."

□ However, Bangert continues, "LSC Superintendent **Les Huddle** said the district will stop short of asking teachers to catalogue every book and other materials in their individual classroom collections – something LSC school board member **Chuck Hockema** asked weeks after he joined the board

after being elected in November 2022. 'We're comfortable sharing the information and believe that what we have in our schools is appropriate,' Huddle said. 'And we feel we're meeting the request Mr. Hockema made. ... And we've been able to accomplish that without every teacher having to come up with a list from personal libraries that they may have purchased with their own finances for their classrooms. We're very comfortable that they're age-appropriate and they're topic-appropriate.' Hockema said he hadn't gone through the library catalogs, which previously were available in a different format, not directly available through the LSC webpage. But he said it wasn't everything he'd asked for. Hockema said he'll be working to get more, as well as recruiting volunteers to help him do it."

• Loogootee Community Schools implements a new policy for the imminent school year, "effectively closing the campus to all students, including seniors, for lunch for the upcoming school year. Loogootee and Washington were the only two area schools that allowed senior-class students to leave school during lunch," reports WAMW 107.9-FM in Washington.

• The Concord Community Schools Board of Trustees takes an initial look at the district's proposed attendance procedures, reports the *Goshen News*. The goal of administrators "will be for all students to be in attendance at least 94% of the time, barring medical exemptions" after 51% of students missed at least 10 days in the last school year. "The new procedure, if approved would incorporate emails, text messages, postcards, notifications, and home visits at various stages of truancy, as well as a new attendance officer and attendance hearings."

• School City of Hammond administrators and the school board are at loggerheads on some issues related to authority, reports **Adrian Martinez-De La Cruz** for the *Times of Northwest Indiana*. At a recent board meeting, members objected to CFO **Eric Krutz** making certain transfers of funds without board approval. " 'Well the reality is that as your CFO, I transferred that money,' Krutz replied, telling how he was now asking the board to keep the transfers in place on a longer-term basis. And if the board did not approve them, he would go back and transfer the money back into the operating referendum fund and the financial report would show a negative balance. The board later unanimously approved the transfers."

□ According to the *Times* account, "Another moment of disagreement came when (Superintendent **Scott**) **Miller** asked the school board to renew Hammond's agreement with Kelly Education to continue providing substitute teacher services" for some \$3 million.. "It appears that we're going to have two employers under the same roof, which absolutely makes no sense," said [one board member]. She further went on to say the renewal was a "big ticket" item coming out

of the educational fund, and it would be a “fiscal disaster” if Kelly Education’s contract was renewed. [Another board member] urged her colleagues to renew the contract since the company was providing initiatives to substitute teachers the district couldn’t provide, and they were also on a time crunch, given classes start in three and a half weeks. Miller also said the alternative was for the district to not approve the renewal, become the employer again and try to reemploy all the substitutes that were with Kelly. The school board ultimately renewed the agreement.”

## *IN School Health & Safety . . .*

- U.S. Sen. **Mike Braun** (R) joins forces with U.S. Sen. **Sherrod Brown** (D-OH) to introduce the “American Food for American Schools Act,” a bipartisan measure that seeks to ensure American-produced food is being served in school lunches. “Our school lunch programs should be supporting American agriculture rather than importing food: it’s safer, healthier, and supports our economy rather than China’s,” says Sen. Braun. “I took the lead with Senator Brown to introduce the American Food for American Schools Act in the Senate because American kids should be eating American-grown food in our schools,” he adds.

- The Braun-Brown bill would provide what the duo describes as robust structure to the National School Lunch Program’s Buy America language. The bill would codify limited exceptions to the requirement, only granting waivers when domestic commodities or products are not reasonably available in sufficient quality or quantities. If a waiver is received, schools must notify parents that American food is not being provided. Waivers could only be granted for up to five percent of the total annual commercial food costs of a school food authority within each food component. The bill would also require the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to publish information about the adoption of the Buy America requirement, including both a list of granted waivers and of foreign products purchased without a waiver. This information would serve as a “market” for domestic producers to challenge the waiver or enter the market with domestic content. To streamline the “Buy America” contracting process, the bill would impose Buy American contract requirements for school food procurement. This provision is intended to lighten the load of School Food Authorities (SFAs), who may currently have issues creating or demanding language in contract negotiations. If an SFA is provided illegal products in breach of the contract (as in a last minute substitution), the school would have safe harbor. USDA would have authority to seek reimbursement from commercial food suppliers for illegal foreign-sourced products that violate Buy America contract language. These funds would finance USDA’s Buy American Procurement Training Program. Finally, the bill would subject other USDA

school feeding programs (afterschool snacks, summer food service, child and adult care food, special milk, and school breakfast) to the Buy America requirement, which currently only applies to the National School Lunch Program.

- Over the next few weeks, state and local law enforcement officers will be increasing patrols to prevent stop-arm violations, speeding, and other forms of reckless driving around school buses and in school zones. More than 200 law enforcement agencies across are participating in the back-to-school Stop Arm Violation Enforcement (SAVE) campaign. The overtime patrols are funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration through grants administered by the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute.

- On April 25, 6,665 bus drivers from 195 Hoosier school districts participating in the one-day National School Bus Illegal Passing Driver Survey, managed by the Indiana Department of Education, counted 2,091 stop-arm violations in Indiana. That single-day tally, when multiplied by the number of school days, adds up to a potential 376,380 violations throughout the school year.

- Some parents of Fort Wayne Community Schools students take their concerns over alleged understaffing and overcrowding in special needs classes to district administrators.

- The North Knox School Corporation Board of School Trustees renews a memorandum of understanding with the Knox County Sheriff’s Department to provide school resource officers at all North Knox school buildings.

- The DeKalb County Central United School District school board approves a revised memorandum of understanding between the district, the DeKalb County Sheriff’s Office, and Auburn Police Department that will allow the district’s school resource officer program to triple in number to three full-time officers.

- A memorandum to the board from the district’s safety director, **Austin Harrison** (who also does double-duty as principal of J.R. Watson Elementary School) explains that “This expansion will significantly increase the amount of time that a SRO is in the schools for all DeKalb Central students and staff,” allow “all six schools to have a consistent SRO within each building on a daily basis.” The total cost for the 2023-24 school year will be \$186,475, according to the *Auburn Evening Star* – \$121,000 for two SROs from the DeKalb County Sheriff’s Office and \$65,475 for one SRO from the Auburn Police Department. “DeKalb County Sheriff’s Office and Auburn Police Department will be responsible for the fringe benefits for their respective officers,” Harrison’s memo notes.

□ Under the district’s previous SRO program, “one full-time SRO was housed at the high school. There were three part-time SROs: one providing coverage at DeKalb Middle School; one covering J.R. Watson and McKenney-Harrison elementary schools; and one covering Waterloo and Country Meadow elementary schools, Harrison explained,” according to the *Evening Star*. The district’s eventual goal: a full-time SRO in each building.

## IN Facilities & Construction . . .

- Indiana Department of Administration is asking the State Budget Committee August 4 to tap into the \$253,000,000 that the legislature appropriated in the new state budget for the co-location of Indiana School for the Blind & Visually Impaired (ISBVI) and School for the Deaf. These funds will be directed toward necessary sitework and a complete renovation of several existing buildings on the current ISBVI campus in Indianapolis, including the business offices and administration buildings. Funds will also be used for construction of several new buildings to accommodate both schools on the same campus, including dormitories, dining, health centers, education buildings, sports fields, and a parking garage.
- The Fort Wayne Community Schools board of trustees unanimously approves a \$10.25 million construction project funded by a \$12 million bond issue, to improve accessibility

and security at several FWCS schools. The \$3 million in security upgrades will include secure entrance vestibules, security panels, security film for select windows, “open gate detection systems,” and access controls.

□ Accessibility upgrades will include replacing platform lifts with higher capacity equipment and carry “an overall construction budget of \$6 million. They will affect Young Early Childhood Center; Adams, Harrison Hill, St. Joseph Central and Weisser Park Elementary Schools; Jefferson, Kekionga, Lane, Northwood and Portage Middle Schools; and the Center for Academic Success at Nebraska.”

□ A pre-construction services contract with FCI Construction totals \$28,125, reports **Ashley Sloboda** for the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*, while a design services agreement with Martin Riley Architects and Engineers is estimated at \$449,400.

□ Sloboda adds that “FWCS hopes to generate millions for additional safety efforts, including a weapons detection system, through a November ballot measure. If the referendum is successful, the district anticipates the annual cost for property taxpayers will be \$76 based on FWCS’ average homestead property value, \$167,325.” Officials say “the district is using general obligation bonds to address some security needs so it can start on those improvements immediately than wait for a successful referendum.”

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- Northwest Allen County Schools officials identify a site for locating a third middle school, with construction costs estimated at \$74 million.

- The Concord Community Schools Board of Trustees approves a \$3.5 million general obligation bond to help fund upgrades of parking lots at Ox Bow Elementary School and East Side Elementary Schools, alleviating traffic and accessibility concerns and improving drainage and lighting . . . as well as improve the high school softball fields which also have drainage issues, need new fencing and scoreboards, and could benefit from improved pedestrian paths and access.

- Should the expenses associated with the bonds prove lower than budgeted, proceeds could also ultimately help to pay for paving at Ox Bow Elementary School’s playground, as well as a new boiler for the school, and replacement of a school bus.

- Lake Central School Corporation finds \$28,522.03 in savings on an HVAC project at Grimmer Middle School, simply by reusing existing vents in 11 classrooms. The district also receives approval from Town of St. John authorities to add lights to the high school baseball and softball fields. The district looks to have the foundations and the bulk of attendant wiring work completed before the start of the school year, but does not expect the light poles to be delivered until mid-October, with some other electrical components not slated to be on site until the LC winter break.

- Arsenal Tech High School in Indianapolis was the beneficiary of renovations that included improvements to the fitness spaces, athletic trainer’s room, meeting and media room, and the culinary arts wing thanks to Group 1001 employees (and their 1001 Hours of Impact community service program) and the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation working together on a two-day volunteer project, reports WTHR-TV in Indianapolis.

- The Elwood Community School Corporation School Board takes key steps toward a planned improvement program for multiple facilities estimated at \$12 million to \$18 million that will require a 20-year bond paid for through property taxes, reports **Ken de la Bastide** of the *Anderson Herald Bulletin*. Anderson architectural firm krM is involved in the work, which should see bids “received in October, with construction expected to start next spring.”

- The board approves a lease with a building corporation and resolutions that will pave the way to selling a portion of the former Hines Career Center building. District officials say the project “includes connecting the career center and high school and locating fire safety measures and precision manufacturing into the new facility,” with

“a new welding laboratory with 18 booths instead of six. There will also be a commons entry for the career center for students to gather before and between classes. The robotic classroom is also scheduled to be remodeled,” and “plans also call for a new weight room and restrooms at the Elwood Intermediate School. The current space housing the precision manufacturing classes will be remodeled to allow for the consolidation of the administrative offices at 1306 N. Anderson St.”

- The DeKalb County Central United School District school board unanimously votes to initiate a \$12.755 million bond sale To fund \$12.5 million of facility upgrades following what the *Auburn Evening Star* characterizes as “months of discussion, board meetings and work sessions to determine the next steps for funding and elements members want to see included in facilities improvements.” This vote followed June’s 3-2 rejection of pursuing a \$20.87 million bond issue for broader upgrades. Expect final approval of bond resolutions in mid-October with bonds likely sold in late October and bond closing likely in mid- to late November, according to the paper.

- Interim CFO **Brandon Penrod** also outlined projects that could be funded via some \$2.1 million in current operational fund dollars, including: “\$63,783 to address a front office leak at DeKalb High School; \$105,880 for a generator for egress and fire alarm at Waterloo Elementary School; \$345,201 for windows and doors upgrades at Country Meadow Elementary School; \$45,000 to address an uneven gravel walk surface at the high school; \$200,000 each for playgrounds at Waterloo and Country Meadow; \$75,000 for bleachers at Waterloo; \$140,000 for bleachers at McKenney-Harrison Elementary School; \$140,000 for bleachers at J.R. Watson Elementary School; \$140,000 for bleachers at Country Meadow; \$127,566 for tuck pointing and exterior repair at the high school; and \$128,390 for tuck pointing and exterior repair at Country Meadow. Penrod also identified \$300,000 that is remaining in a J.R. Watson bond that can be used to pay for a fire alarm upgrade with voice and DDC (Direct Digital Controls) upgrades. There also is about \$1 million remaining in a middle school bond that can be used to pay for a fire alarm upgrade with voice, bleachers and exterior metal siding at the middle school, Penrod noted,” and the *Evening Star* reported.

- The proposed bond sale would be tax-rate neutral and fund projects at the following schools:

DeKalb High School – fire alarm upgrade with voice, upgrade fire extinguisher cabinets with ADA pulls, asphalt and concrete repair and classroom technology, \$2,116,130.

DeKalb Middle School – section of roof work, DDC controls upgrades, \$2,157,276.

Waterloo Elementary School – fire alarm upgrade with voice; heating, ventilation and air conditioning overhaul and upgrade to temp spec units, \$6,059,969.

Country Meadow Elementary School – fire alarm upgrade with voice, main power upgrade, DDC controls upgrade, \$539,510.

J.R. Watson Elementary School – generator for essential services, partial asphalt repair, plumbing fixtures, exterior brick repair and tuck pointing, \$303,270.

McKenney-Harrison Elementary School – DDC controls, digital watchdog upgrade for cameras, \$486,337.

□ Look for bonds likely being sold in late October and bond closing likely in mid- to late November. The board is advertising for a construction manager as constructor, much as it successfully did in a 2021 improvement project.

• The Vigo County School Corporation board hires hometown Garmong Construction to provide construction manager as a constructor (CMc) services (from four firms who applied) and retains Schmidt Associates as the architect/engineer for major HVAC and plumbing work at Vigo North High School, Vigo South High School, and Vigo West High School/Middle School after a Schmidt facility needs analysis.

□ A tentative timeline foresees bids being sought between December and February, with construction starting about February or March, **Sue Loughlin** reports for the *Terre Haute Tribune-Star*. “The team will then publicly bid individual trade packages to subcontractors. The process provides a guaranteed maximum price, a guaranteed schedule, and transfers the risk of timeline and cost from the school corporation to the CMc,” she explains, “And time is of the essence, since the deadline to use ESSER funds is December 2024 and the district is aware of the potential for supply chain and labor shortage issues.” Superintendent **Chris Himsel** tells the school board that VCSC will endeavor to complete the project done by the deadline, “but there are some factors we may not be able to control, which is why we are doing proactive work to protect ourselves,” with school officials “in contact with state and federal officials about the potential for extension of that federal deadline.”

□ The project is estimated at about \$24 million. The district “has \$18 million in federal ESSER funds to address HVAC and related electrical issues and it will use \$6 million in general obligation bond funds to address plumbing needs. Schmidt would be paid 6.5% of the total construction cost,” while Garmong’s costs include a “preconstruction services fixed fee of \$25,000; a construction services fixed fee of about \$40,000 per month related to project staffing; and a fee percentage, based on the total construction cost, of 2.35% (negotiated down from 2.9%),” Loughlin reports.

• The East Allen County Schools school board is reviewing the district’s preliminary capital projects plan for the upcoming budget cycle, a three-year schedule that includes building repairs and remodels, equipment repairs and equipment purchases exceeding \$10,000, reports **Ashley Sloboda** for the *Fort Wayne Journal Gazette*. Projects proposed for 2024, to be paid for from the district’s operating fund, “include new carpeting, restroom updates, lighting improvements and door replacements at various schools.” “I think we need to talk long-term about how do we make this list more public and look for businesses and for philanthropists who want to help partner with our schools,” says board member **Ron Turpin**, a local business leader who ran an unsuccessful campaign for state senate in the 2022 Republican primary election.

• Carmel Clay Schools administrators propose \$24 million in major renovations to the 32-year-old Carmel High School football stadium, “including expanded office space, new classrooms and an elevator, a corridor to improve flow throughout the facility, a renovated and expanded press box and more, reports **Ann Marie Shambaugh** for *Current in Carmel*.

□ Cherry Tree Elementary School, which opened in 1989, is also budgeted for upgrades of some \$30 million which include “expanded office space and reconfigured entryway, additional classrooms, converting a loft to a makerspace area, more staff restrooms and other improvements, “ according to Shambaugh. “Other proposed projects in the district include \$3 million for outdoor improvements to the parking lot and landscaping at Creekside Middle School; \$2.5 million for repairs and minor remodeling at Carmel Middle School; \$6 million for technology equipment and upgrades; and \$2.5 million for miscellaneous repairs throughout the district.”

□ The Carmel district plans to fund the projects “through lease rental bonds, which are not expected to alter the existing tax rate and are set to be paid off in 10 years. The school board is expected to hold public hearings on the proposed projects and funding in August and September.”

• The Peru Community Schools school board approves a \$3.6 million package of renovations to the athletic complex at Peru Jr./Sr. High School. Work will include reconstructing the running track, improving field event venues, installing new grandstands, upgrading the audio system, and more.

• The Jay School Corporation proposed budget “lays out a three-year capital projects plan, with roof replacement, as usual, the most costly item each year. Nearly \$545,000 in roof projects are planned for 2024, with \$325,000 in 2025 and \$285,000 in 2026,” according to the *Portland Commercial Review*. “Other major projects in 2024 include lights for the baseball field at \$338,200, other lighting at \$155,000 and new vehicles at

\$150,000. School security upgrades (\$190,000), softball lights (\$165,000) and parking lot work (\$150,000) is planned for 2025, and parking lot work, new vehicles and grounds equipment are all estimated at \$100,000 in 2026.”

- An extensive proposed renovation effort for the Jac-Cen-Del School Corporation has attracted considerable community attention, reports the *Osgood Journal*. The district is looking to go to market for bonding for the project, and a financial advisor from Raymond James estimates the tax impact at a \$0.1262 increase. “He noted that on a \$100,000 residential property, the increase would mean only \$17.72,” but the district is heavily rural with a considerable amount of agricultural land that is taxed differently.

- Jac-Cen-Del Superintendent **Sam Melton** itemized facility needs and upgrades as well as approximate costs. These include: roof replacement at the high school (\$1,372,000); two air-handling units in the gym (\$750,000); a new boiler (\$350,000) and water heater (\$50,000); and upgrades to the intercom system (\$40,000) . . . elementary school main entry doors (\$350,000); repair and replacement of gym bleachers (\$150,000); correction of are drainage issues in the parking lot, playground area, and around the building itself (\$1,400,000); improvement of the intercom and public address and horn system (\$10,000); track resurfacing (\$350,000); and replacement of playground equipment (a match from the

Reynolds Foundation of \$225,000 will offset the \$400,000 cost) . . . and construction of a multipurpose building that would offer an expanded area for instruction, athletics, and club activities (\$1,600,000).

- The Northwest Allen County Schools school board unanimously approves a resolution to spend \$1,975,000 to purchase 91.26 acres of land in Huntertown for a new middle school. Groundbreaking is slated for spring, with a fall 2026 opening date.

- Among the Community Project Funding requests for CD 01 being advanced by U.S. Rep. **Frank Mrvan** (D) for Fiscal Year 2024: \$963,000 for the Challenger Learning Center of Northwest Indiana, Inc. The funding will be utilized for the purchase and installation of a new Mission Control Simulator to upgrade existing technology.

- The Wawasee Community School Corporation held a special school board meeting this week to review a pair of proposed building projects that could be financed by a \$77.15 million bond issue, which would yield \$75 million for project costs.

- The board is reviewing options initially funneled through a community engagement committee, reports the Warsaw Times-Union, with four “Tier One” projects outlined: Milford Elementary School, a performing arts center for the high school,



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a fieldhouse, and a natatorium. “The board had discussed the options and agreed Milford Elementary and a performing arts center made the most sense for the school system.” The board is also considering “either a significant renovation or a new building altogether for Milford Elementary School,” and is working with Elevatus Architecture on the 70,000-square-foot Milford Elementary School project. The board also from the Ohio-based multi-disciplinary design firm Garmann Miller about where a proposed performing arts center could be sited.

- Look for the North Miami Community Schools to embark upon an improvement project for the interior academic spaces at North Miami Middle/High School and renovations at the elementary school after the board agrees to a \$4 million bond issue for the work.
- On the night before Whiteland Elementary School in the Clark-Pleasant Community School Corporation was to open for the new school year, rain and roof issues under repair resulted in sufficient water damage in as many as five classrooms and some hallways that administrators were compelled to postpone the first day of school by one full day.
- The Greendale Middle School gym floor develops what are described as “bubbles” pushing up the wood planks, and will be replaced at a cost of some \$190,000, a project expected to consume eight weeks. Repairs would have cost approximately \$20,000, but without assurances that the problem could resurface. The issue was discovered when the floor was being sanded in advance of revarnishing, work undertaken approximately every five years. The wood floor sits on top of the facility’s original rubberized floor, and with contractors pointing some of the blame at the subsurface, the rubber sub-floor will also be removed and replaced.

## IN Referenda . . .

- Advance HSE, the group that successfully led the 2016 referendum for Hamilton Southeastern Schools, relaunches. The committee, comprised of parents, teachers, and community volunteers, is now focused on generating public support for the continuation of the Hamilton Southeastern Schools operating referendum renewal at a reduced rate, which is set to appear on the November 7 ballot. **Sneha Shah** and **Laura Smoots** will lead this grassroots effort supporting the operating referendum renewal.
- The Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation is considering seeking a May 2024 capital referendum “to potentially fund a number of facilities projects – including the construction of a new elementary school on the west side,” which would be the 12th in the district, **Jana Wiersema** reports in a detailed article in the *Columbus Republic*. “BCSC

officials plan to seek community input on the proposal before bringing a final recommendation to the board in October.” Assistant Superintendent of Financial Services Chad Phillips serves up a very fluid estimate between \$250 million and “somewhere just north of \$300 million. And again, those are based on very rough estimates from CSO (Architects). Due to debt that will be rolling off from BCSC in the next few years, the tax rate would remain relatively flat if the referendum were passed, he said.” Voters approved a BCSC operating referendum in June 2020 with more than 60% of the vote.

□ Potential projects, estimated costs, and start dates for a wish list that totals \$306 million:

- New west-side elementary school (\$60 million, 2024)
- Renovations to remaining elementary schools (\$114 million, 2024-2028)
- Significant renovations for Northside Middle School and tech/equipment updates at Central Middle School (\$53 million, 2025)
- Additions and renovations to both Columbus North and East high schools (\$14 million, 2027)
- PE/athletics expansions at the two high schools (\$62 million, 2027)
- A “to be determined” project involving program and facility work at the McDowell Education Center and the R. L. Johnson Building (\$3 million, 2024 and 2026)

□ Phillips estimates that “for a home with a gross assessed value of \$200,000, the referendum would cause an increase of about \$8 per month on their tax bill if BCSC only focuses on building the new elementary school and renovating existing elementary schools.” However, “If the school corporation includes the full list of facility needs in the referendum, the estimated increase would range from \$8 to \$14 per month. The impact would vary over time as the school corporation replaces old, non-exempt debt service with new, exempt debt service.”

## IN Transition . . .

- Indiana’s founding solicitor general, **Thomas M. Fisher**, will leave the Office of the Attorney General next month after more than two decades to join the Indianapolis-based nonprofit advocacy group EdChoice. Fisher joined OAG in 2001 and became the state’s first solicitor general in 2005. “I am a lawyer who believes in a calling,” Fisher says. “And after two decades in the Office of Attorney General, I have been called to advance the cause of liberty on a new front.”

□ EdChoice President and CEO **Rob Enlow** hints at the role he has in mind for a leader of Fisher’s caliber: “With the rapid growth of universal choice in education over the last three years, Tom Fisher will be joining EdChoice as it expands its legal affairs work,” Enlow explains. “With so many new programs and efforts around the country, there is more need than ever to provide legal services to the school choice movement.”

- Sen. **John B. Crane** (R) of Avon will complete his current term, but will not seek re-election to a third term from SD 24 in 2024. He currently serves as the ranking member of the Senate Committee on Education and Career Development.

- **Sam Barnett**, associate director of advocacy for the Indiana Afterschool Network, registers with the state as a compensated individual lobbyist, which concurrently registers as an employer lobbyist.

- **Jim Dubois**, who retired as superintendent of Baugo Community Schools in 2019 after a decade, is tapped as the interim superintendent for another Elkhart County district: Goshen Community Schools. Dubois has stayed active in the education community since his retirement four years ago as director of educational partnerships at Horizon Education Alliance and founding Craftsman Mindset Enterprises LLC.

□ The *Goshen News* elaborates that “Dubois’ work agreement allows for extensions but is currently set to continue through the end of the first semester of the 2023-24 school year,” and administrators indicate that if a superintendent is not hired by December, “they may consider extending the contract. Dubois’ contract is an hourly one, not a salary one, maxed at 40 hours as an independent contractor.”

- **Carrie Milner**, who retired in 2014 as superintendent of the Cloverdale Community School Corporation, will serve as interim superintendent for the North Putnam Community School Corporation.

- **Karen Goeller** retires after 36 years with the Vigo County School Corporation, after having served many of those years as deputy superintendent responsible for the district’s curriculum and instruction team.

- Plymouth Community School Corporation taps **Steven Boyer** as its new business manager, pending Board Approval. Boyer earned his undergrad degree in Education at Manchester University and a Master’s in Education from Indiana Wesleyan University, followed by an MBA in Healthcare Administration. He served as the chief human resources officer at Concord Community Schools, and prior to that, he held administrative roles in Plymouth and Warsaw, along with teaching English for PCSC.

- Richmond Community Schools school board member **Stacy Mopps** is leaving the board to return to work for RCS as its human resources officer. Mopps had served as principal at Test Intermediate School before being elected to an at-large seat in November 2022.

- **Adam McMickle**, a teaching and learning specialist with the Indiana Department of Education, will leave that post after two years to join Greencastle High School as director of student services. He comes to GHS with experience as middle school dean and a teacher at Emma Donnan Elementary and Middle School in Indianapolis, and as a social studies teacher for the Andrew J. Brown Academy.

- **Casey Martin** leaves his post as principal at Marquette Catholic High School in Michigan City after more than two years to assume the role of assistant principal at New Prairie High School.

- La Lumiere School in LaPorte County hires **Andy Webster** as interim head of school. Webster joins La Lumiere after an 18-year tenure as head of school at the Wardlaw+Hartridge School, a private, nonsectarian, coeducational day school in Edison, New Jersey, United States, serving students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grades.

- The New Albany-Floyd County School Corporation had temporarily held off on hiring a permanent principal for Floyd Central High School, telling parents last month that it planned to hire an interim principal for the upcoming school year, and begin a search for a permanent principal in early 2024.

□ After the initial search settled on three people, including internal candidates, Superintendent **Travis Madison** – who has only been in the post since June – writes to parents, “We didn’t feel comfortable placing any applicants from outside our district in the role on a permanent basis. We felt we had some viable options from within the district to place an ‘interim’ position, but doing so would have also created a ‘domino effect’ where we could possibly have had some other huge voids to fill.” He indicates that internal candidates who reapply may face a better chance of success in 2024 as the district will have more time to fill spot they may leave open. Meanwhile, some district parents were grumbling about a perceived lack of transparency in the process.

□ The district began looking at retired principals as well as NAFCS administrators to potentially fill the interim position, and on Monday, the night before the new school year opened, the board hired **Dr. Albert Eckert** as the new interim principal. He is a former math teacher with several years of experience as a principal, and retired just last year as principal of Silver Creek High School in nearby Sellersburg, part of the Silver Creek School Corporation. Ironically, Eckert’s former post at Silver Creek High School is being filled by **Rob Willman**, who left as principal at Floyd Central for that job.

□ **Amy Miller** is also hired as the dean of students at New Albany High School.

• Hamilton Southeastern Schools loses yet another long-time administrator since the last school board election. After 15 years with HSE working at several schools and ultimately as assistant superintendent of staff and student services, **Kim Lippe** leaves to join Brownsburg High School as its new principal in September. Lippe earned multiple master's degrees from Indiana University and is currently completing her doctorate in education at Ball State University.

□ Lippe succeeds Dr. **Bret Daghe**, who will transition to a new role after 17 years as principal, becoming project manager for the Brownsburg Community School Corporation. Dr. Daghe's new post comes as veteran BCSC Chief Operations Officer **John Voigt** starts his retirement.

• Heritage Hills High School in the North Spencer School Corporation adds **Kate Kress** as principal. She has 15 years of experience teaching at the elementary school level, 14 of which were spent at North Spencer's David Turnham Elementary School.

• **Kim Preston** joins The Mind Trust, an Indianapolis-based education nonprofit, as senior vice president of policy, leading its efforts to advance and support local and state policies that

advance access to high-quality education. She will also serve as the organization's policy expert, create strategic partnerships, and serve as a key advisor to executive leadership.

□ Preston moves from the Indiana Department of Education, where, as assistant secretary of external affairs & partnerships, she led communications, strategic planning, and public affairs work for IDOE. Preston also previously served as director of communications and director of strategic initiatives for IDOE. She has also served as director of workforce and education Initiatives for the City of Indianapolis, and held communications and policy roles with former U.S. Sen. Richard Lugar (R) and the Indiana Republican Party.

• We told you early this year about an Arsenal Tech High School principal, Dr. **Corye Franklin**, resigning four months after he was placed on administrative leave pending an investigation into "potential district policy violations." We also told you that WRTV-TV in Indianapolis was reporting then that "Indianapolis Public Schools have declined to answer questions from WRTV about the investigation or regarding why Franklin was placed on leave in the first place."

□ Your favorite newsletter now learns that Franklin has emerged in Lexington, Kentucky, as principal of Henry Clay High School, one of the city's largest schools. Veteran reporter **Valarie Honeycutt Spears** tells readers of the



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*Lexington Herald-Leader* about the hire, writing that “Fayette County officials are ‘confident he will be a strong leader for Henry Clay,’ as one official declared, but Indianapolis Public Schools General Counsel **Ken Pack** “did not return messages from the Herald-Leader” about the situation and circumstances, she adds.

□ The *Herald-Leader* account – in stories across different days – indicate that “Franklin ‘came back whistle clean’ when Fayette Superintendent **Demetrus Liggins** looked into his background,” and Liggins told the *Herald-Leader* there was a ‘policy that there was a disagreement on and ultimately the policy that was broken ended up being removed anyway.’ ‘His stance was right,’ Liggins said of Franklin. Franklin was placed back into a leadership role in Indianapolis before resigning in December .... Liggins said he was limited to what he could say about a personnel issue, but said he conducted a thorough background investigation to make sure Franklin could lead.” “He said the administrative leave had nothing to do with students. The Indianapolis school district superintendent who placed Franklin on leave gave him ‘a stellar recommendation,’ written and orally, Liggins said, and regretted placing him on leave.” Franklin earned his bachelor’s degree in elementary education with a minor in Spanish from Indiana University, a master’s degree in education from Indiana Wesleyan University, and his doctorate in educational and organizational leadership from Marian University.

## IN Courts & Conduct . . .

• Judge **James P. Hanlon** of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana denies a request for declaratory or injunctive relief from the American Civil Liberties Union of Indiana from part of HEA 1608-2023. *Smiley v. Jenner*, No. 1:23-cv-10011:23-cv-01001-JPH-MKK. This is the legislation which prohibits, among other things, a school employee or staff member of a school from providing any “instruction” to students in prekindergarten through grade 3 on “human sexuality.” ACLU of Indiana, representing Indianapolis Public Schools elementary school teacher **Kayla Smiley**, contends that the new law limiting how “human sexuality” is taught in the classroom, was too vague and placed her at risk of having her teacher’s license revoked or suspended.

□ In a 15-page ruling, Judge Hanlon finds that Smiley failed to meet the standard for an injunction (showing “some likelihood of succeeding on the merits of her claims”), and her facial challenge to the new law had not clearly shown her free speech rights would be infringed given that government employees enjoy a lower level of First Amendment protections when on the job. He also found that the state courts can more appropriately interpret the law’s scope for a potential future as-applied challenge.

• The Hanover Community School Corporation Board of Trustees votes 4-1 to have the Cedar Lake district join a class-action lawsuit in California state court filed by assorted school districts (and led by Kansas City-based Wagstaff & Cartmell) against Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok and YouTube seeking compensation for damages suffered by the districts and students as a result of the development, operation, and marketing of social media platforms.

□ Concord Community Schools is also considering joining a coalition of school districts across the state in litigation against social media companies. According to the *Goshen News*, “Districts already involved in Indiana include Indianapolis Public Schools, Fort Wayne Community Schools, Elkhart Community Schools, Greater Clark County Schools, and Lawrenceburg Community Schools, among others.” According to the paper, Superintendent **Dan Funston** explained to the Board of Trustees “that the strain on school districts caused by social media and its effects on students is the catalyst for the potentially nationwide litigation. ‘I think you probably would have to have been living under a rock lately to not know that things have come out in recent past about how social media companies drive traffic to our kids,’ Funston said. ‘Facebook, TikTok, Snapchat and Google have been presented with the evidence that some things that are presented to students have detrimental effects.’ Funston went on to explain that Indiana is 49th in the state in mental health support to students and claims that social media causes a strain on mental health counselors within the district caused by things happening on social media and interactions with each other on social media.”

□ The *News* reports that “The lawsuit alleges that social media has placed an unnecessary burden on school administrators by creating a disruptive school environment, as well as social media addiction and subsequent mental health crises, causing schools to hire additional mental health professionals, develop lesson plans on social media harms, provide training to educators, staff and community; address property damage caused by mentally anguished students, increase disciplinary measures; address bullying, harassment, and threats; confiscate electronic devices, notify parents and guardians of behavioral and attendance issues, investigate and respond to threats made over social media, and update handbooks and school policies. Among students, the lawsuit claims that social media is responsible for an increase in anxiety, depression, eating disorders, body dysmorphia, Attention-Deficit Disorder and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, local of focus and inability to concentrate, self-harm, and suicidal ideation, and that the law affords districts the opportunity to hold social media companies responsible for damage caused to children.”

□ All of that resonates with Superintendent Funston. “There’s a lot of things that come with that when they’re targeting students,” he told board members. “A lot of supports

that have to be placed in school, a lot of police support takes place that involves that.” “You’ve heard me rant and rave about the impact of social media on our students and hope this is something that we can support and show our support by our participation in this,” Funston adds.

- The Northwest Allen County Schools is considering adding its imprimatur to a lawsuit against social media companies using the same law firm that represented the district in its recent lawsuit against JUUL Labs over vape products.

- According to WFFT-TV Fox 55 in Fort Wayne, school board member **Darren Vogt** asked rhetorically, “When do we stop?” “He argued, by the same logic, the school district could also sue phone companies, car manufacturers and anyone else producing distracting or dangerous products. Vogt says parents should manage their children’s social media use; not the district.”

- Last year we told you in these pages about a lawsuit filed in U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana against Elkhart Community Schools over the death of 12-year-old North Side Middle School student Rio Allred, whom we told you even before then suffered from alopecia and committed suicide after allegedly being bullied at school, *Ball v. Elkhart Cmty. Sch. Dist.*, No. 3:22-cv-00730-DRL-MGG. Her family sued the district, seeking \$4 million in damages, alleging documented proof of verbal and physical bullying against the young victim, but claiming that the school did nothing about it, failing to follow its own policies and intervene over extreme bullying.

- The family settled its lawsuit against the district last month, with the terms (the family also sought changes in how bullying incidents were handled) as yet undisclosed, though WVPE 88.1-FM, the National Public Radio member station whose license holder is Elkhart Community Schools, has filed an Open Records Act request seeking the terms of the settlement. The station reminds listeners that “Rio’s death prompted a student walkout and calls for the district to do more to address bullying.”

- The Office of the Attorney General files suit in Madison County Circuit Court 3 seeking restitution of \$1,118,325.26 – as well as treble damages – from former Anderson Community Schools Corporation food service department bookkeeper **Carla Burke**, who is incarcerated in a federal prison in Texas through May 2025 after being convicted in February of wire fraud and filing false tax returns in a scheme in which she diverted funds from the school district to her personal accounts. *State ex rel. Rokita v. Burke*, No. 48C03-2307-PL-000085. We told you about the State Board of Accounts audit and federal criminal proceedings in her case. The State is seeking restitution for a pecuniary loss

of \$976,773.29; penalties, interest, and other charges in the amount of \$20,109.64; and special investigation costs in the total amount of \$121,442.33.

- After an investigation by the Auburn Police Department at the instigation of the principal of the McKinney-Harrison Elementary School who became concerned about the balance of the school’s parent teacher organization, the PTO president from 2019 through June 2023, **Carolynn Carteaux**, 32, was charged this week with Level 6 Felony Theft in DeKalb County Superior Court 1. *State v. Carteaux*, No. 17D01-2307-F6-000161.

- A probable cause affidavit notes that when the PTO treasurer resigned in mid-2021, she was not replaced and Carteaux “would spend freely, deciding what was purchased, when, where, and how much to spend on the items purchased,” with the investigating detective labeling her “a spendthrift.” In an interview with police, “she admitted to making several purchases for her personal benefit, thus committing several thefts. For example, she used the PTO debit card to pay for a family vacation to Tybee Island, Georgia in October 2022.” “In total, Carolynn Carteaux admitted to stealing \$8,807.21 until she resigned as president of the PTO in June, 2023. On May 3 |, 2023, the McKinney-Harrison PTO checking account balance totaled \$1,225.89. There were several overdraft fees, thus indicating that Carolynn Carteaux had spent all of the money at various points in time.” The investigating detective suggests that “it is possible that the total amount stolen is higher than what Carolynn Carteaux admitted to taking.”

- A statement from the DeKalb County Central United School District serves up these words:

Many families and patrons help provide DeKalb Central Schools students with a quality education. Some volunteer time, some contribute money, some do both. These efforts include, among many others, volunteering with booster clubs and parent-teacher organizations, helping plan school events and other student celebrations, and staffing concession stands during performances and contests. When volunteering, patrons are expected to comply with all laws; when they do not, appropriate action will be taken.

Recently, DeKalb Central Schools administration learned that a significant amount of money was missing from the bank account of the McKenney-Harrison Elementary School PTO, which is a separate and distinct organization from the school corporation. When school administrators learned of the missing funds, a report to law enforcement authorities was promptly made. During their investigation, the McKenney-Harrison PTO president, Carolynn Carteaux, admitted to police spending PTO funds on personal expenses. Previously, Ms. Carteaux worked for DeKalb Central Schools as a classified staff member. Her employment has been terminated and a review disclosed that no school corporation funds are missing. Administrators will continue



to cooperate with the county prosecutor in its investigation and prosecution. Additionally, DeKalb Central Schools will assist, where legally permissible, the McKenney-Harrison PTO in its efforts to recover these lost funds.

We expect and demand honesty and integrity from our students; we must likewise demand the same from our volunteers and staff members. When a person fails to meet those basic expectations, discipline will be imposed.

So not to interfere with any criminal prosecution, DeKalb Central Schools does not anticipate publicly commenting further on this issue.

- A lengthy probable cause affidavit filed in DeKalb County Superior Court 1 by the DeKalb County Sheriff's Department lays out a scheme under which former DeKalb High School teacher and FFA sponsor **Trace AK Dean**, 33, allegedly stole welding equipment and scrap metal owned by the DeKalb County Central United School District and sold them for his personal gain. He is charged with three counts of Level 6 Felony Theft and one Level 6 Felony count of Official Misconduct. *State v. Dean*, No. 17D01-2308-F6-000162.

□ The sheriff's department was informed by the high school principal and DeKalb Central Superintendent **Steve Teders** of "a possible theft of property by a full-time school employee." The investigating detective writes that "Dean has been mentioned by many to possibly have sold school owned items from the Agricultural Department." The investigation turned up evidence of school equipment sold by Dean with Dean telling buyers "to get the money directly to him rather than through the school treasurer as he could deposit the money into the FFA accounts quicker and easier than through the school," the affidavit said. The investigation also found Dean had sold scrap items on at least four occasions to OmniSource in Auburn.

□ The school district issued a statement this week similar to that which it had just released regarding an alleged theft by a parent teacher organization president:

DeKalb County Central United School District expects all staff members to abide by all federal, state, and local laws. In May, the DeKalb High School Agricultural Science Teacher, Trace Dean, submitted his resignation as a teacher and the high school FFA sponsor. Prior to his submission of his resignation and since that time, school administrators and school board members heard rumors and received verbal reports from various sources concerning the lack of proper accounting of equipment and material in the agricultural science program. School investigations were unable to specifically confirm any loss or misuse. The rumors and reports remained sufficiently persistent that school administrators reported this matter to law enforcement authorities in June. Using additional investigative resources

available to them, law enforcement learned sufficient facts to charge Trace Dean with four criminal counts on August 1, 2023.

DeKalb Central Schools will continue to fully cooperate with officials investigating and prosecuting this matter. To avoid interfering with that process, school corporation representatives do not anticipate further commenting on this matter.

- In *Rollings v. Vigo Co. Sch. Corp.*, No. 1:2023cv01290, **Michael L. Rollings**, a 10-year school bus driver for the Vigo County School Corporation, files a civil rights lawsuit against the district in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana alleging job discrimination on the basis of gender. He claims that "Similarly-situated female employees were treated more favorably with respect to the terms and conditions of employment and discipline than Rollings," who was ultimately fired by the district. Rollings exhausted his administrative remedies by filing charges with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and receiving the appropriate notice of suit rights. He is represented by **John H. Haskin** and **Paul A. Logan** of John H. Haskin & Associates of Indianapolis.

- On Wednesday, the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office filed two charges of Level 6 Felony Neglect of a Dependent and two Misdemeanor B charges of Compulsory School Attendance Violation in Wayne County Circuit Court against **Carla Kaye Smith**, a mother whose Centerville School Corporation student daughter, now age 11, missed 124 out of 180 days of elementary school during the August 8, 2022, to May 23, 2023 school year. *State v. Smith*, No. 89C01-2308-F6-000298. Elementary school administrators and school resource officers intervened on several occasions to mitigate the attendance issues, which also included tardiness, but with no effect. A probable cause affidavit was filed by the SRO involved, who tells the court that "Carla Smith was advised several times throughout the school year that if she did not ensure that SG was at school that I would file a warrant request with the Prosecutors (sic) office. This never seemed to motivate Carla to ensure that SG went to school."

□ The affidavit also alleges that Smith child missed 75 out of 180 days at Centerville Junior High School, and was tardy on 19 occasions. The affidavit further noted both children had failed many of their respective classes.

□ We recently told you that Richmond Community Schools had decided to crack down on chronic student absenteeism and attendance issues this school year, but it looks like another Wayne County district just down the road beat them to it . . . perhaps serving to get attention from RCS parents as the new school year opens in Richmond.

- In *State v. Bradbury*, No. 06D02-2305-F6-001035, **Michael B. Bradbury** is charged in Boone County Superior Court 2 with Level 6 Felony Unlawful Entry by a Serious Sex Offender for allegedly picking up a juvenile student at a Lebanon elementary school in May at the request of the child’s mother (who had called the school to advise them that she was giving her permission for Bradbury to pick up her daughter). According to a probable cause affidavit filed by a Lebanon Community School Corporation school resource officer, Bradbury entered the school’s main office and gave his driver’s license to the secretary when requested. The secretary scanned it as required of anyone signing out a student, and “an alert appeared on the secretary’s computer that Michael was an offender. Due to having parent approval and notice,” the student “was allowed to leave with Michael. The offender alert was not brought to Michael’s attention to avoid any kind of scene or altercation in the front office.” When the SRO investigated, he discovered the conviction and sex offender registration. “Michael has been registering as a sex offender for over 12 years and it is his responsibility to know the details, guidelines, and restrictions of such registration. Therefore, evidence shows that Michael Bradbury is a serious sex offender who knowingly and intentionally entered school property.”

- *B.T. v. Goodwell*, No. 92D01-2306-CT-000618, originally filed in Whitley County Superior Court, has been removed to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Indiana by the Smith-Green Multi-School School Corporation, one of the defendants in the civil rights lawsuit, and docketed as *B.T. v. Smith-Green Cmty. Sch. Corp.*, No. 1:2023cv00325. Here, a 15-year-old female sophomore varsity basketball player at Churubusco High School, through her parents, sues the school, the school district, the superintendent, basketball coach, athletic director, and school board, alleging retaliation against her for allegedly refusing to allow her to participate in the women’s basketball program based upon actions by the student and her mother “in reporting sexual harassment, sexual discrimination, and other improper conduct by (coach) **David Goodwell** and a female member of his coaching staff. The retaliatory actions and policies of Goodwell were done with the knowledge and approval of the principal and the athletic director of Churubusco High School. This policy of exclusion and retaliation violates Title IX,” they allege, seeking appropriate declaratory and injunctive relief and compensatory damages, costs, and attorney’s fees.

- The circumstances are a bit convoluted, but it seems that an innocent gesture during a practice (“B.T. tapped with her fingertips David Goodwell on the hip in a ‘good game’ motion as a response to David Goodwell changing a song which was playing, as one would do to a teammate. The exchange was recorded on videotape. Coach Goodwell wrongfully characterized the event as B.T. grabbing his buttocks with

both hands and that B.T. acted in an inappropriate manner.”) was met with the coach’s “extreme anger towards B.T.,” and “Goodwell accused B.T. of touching him in a sexually inappropriate manner. Though B.T. apologized to Goodwell, she received a verbal warning.” Things escalated from there, and her mother sent an email to school administrators “regarding multiple instances of sexually inappropriate and/or sexual harassment like-behavior with women student athletes by Goodwell and by a female assistant coach on the Churubusco High School staff,” allegedly leading to retaliation against the student.

- **Christopher “Kit” Degenhart**, 51, a former Crown Point High School theater teacher whom Lake County prosecutors labeled a predator, was sentenced to 1½ years in Lake County Community Corrections and another 2½ years on probation after pleading guilty to Level 5 Felony child seduction in Lake County Superior Court, Criminal Division 3. *State v. Degenhart*, No. 45G03-2207-F5-000342. A second Level 6 Felony count of child seduction was dismissed at sentencing. He was accused of “grooming” at least three teenage students for later sexual relationships.

- On the first day of school for Indianapolis Public Schools, an IPS Police Department officer working at Arsenal Technical High School was notified that a “known suspicious individual was trespassing onto school property,” and as he approached the male subject, he smelled marijuana. After determining he had probable cause to detain the subject, the officer searched a backpack being carried by the individual and found marijuana and related materials suggesting the drug was for sale, as well as a Smith & Wesson 40 mm semi-automatic handgun, and according to a probable cause affidavit, authorities “confirmed that the magazine belonging to the weapon contained 9 live 40 mm rounds.”

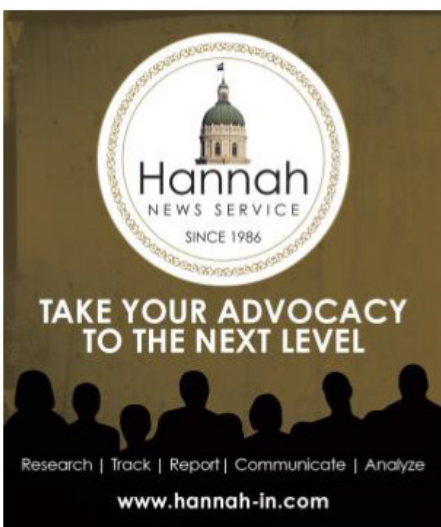
- **David Brown** was charged in Marion County Superior Court 21 with one Level 5 Felony Count of Unlawful Carrying of a Handgun (within 500 ft of school property); one Level 6 Felony count of Possession of Firearm on School Property; and one Misdemeanor B charge of Possession of Marijuana. *State v. Brown*, No. 49D21-2308-F5-021704.

- **Wei-Chun Tsai** resigns his position as a Chinese language teacher at Edgelea Elementary school in the Lafayette School Corporation following three separate investigations by external agencies were conducted allegations of multiple inappropriate acts and mistreatment of students in the classroom last school year, WLFI-TV, *News 18* in West Lafayette, reports. LSC Superintendent **Les Huddle** tells the station, “Upon all of the investigations nothing was found to be illegal. We came to the decisions to reinstate the teacher and the program,” but just one week after being reinstated, Tsai – the only Chinese language teacher at Edgelea – resigned.

- **Peter J. Anders**, 45, faces five Level 6 Felony charges of battery on a person less than 14 years old and two Misdemeanor B charges of battery related to his “acting inappropriately with female students” from November 2021 to November 2022, during his tenure as a Tippecanoe School Corporation middle school gym teacher, according to a probable cause affidavit filed by police in Tippecanoe County Superior Court 1. *State v. Anders*, No.79D01-2307-F6-000725. These charges follow an investigation by the Tippecanoe County Sheriff’s Department initiated after seven female students reported that the then-Southwestern Middle School teacher had touched them inappropriately, kicked a student, and hit others with a shoe – some of which was captured on “surveillance video footage.”

□ “Peter Anders is no longer an employee of the TSC,” the district’s communications coordinator, **Sue Scott**, told the *Lafayette Journal & Courier*. “After receiving the student complaint, the TSC immediately contacted law enforcement and the Department of Child Services.” The paper reveals that “TSC put Anders on administrative leave on Oct. 26, 2022, and Anders resigned on Feb. 14, 2023, during the investigation. Andres’ LinkedIn account states he works at Paramount Schools of Excellence as a learning coordinator and school liaison.”

- Three boys and a girl – all juveniles under the age of 17 – face charges of burglary, criminal mischief, and theft resulting from their alleged actions at Eastside High School in Butler on four separate occasions between July 16 and 25. Acts of vandalism alleged include damage to a football stadium and softball diamond. Ticket booths, concession booths, restrooms, and a press box were said to be damaged, along with some damage to facilities at a nearby park.



## IN Higher Education

### IN General . . .

- After its Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Informational Technology evaluated different learning management system (LMS) programs for academic use, Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College decides to implement Canvas as the LMS for students to use in the classroom and online beginning this fall. SMWC administrators note that the user-friendly Canvas platform is widely used in high schools, so incoming students are typically familiar with this learning management system when they begin their classes, and it eases some of the transition to the new environment of college coursework.

□ For several years, SMWC has used D2L, Brightspace, for faculty to house their program curriculum and assignment folders. Similar to D2L, Canvas will accommodate course curriculum, assignments, discussions and more while offering new tools to enhance the classroom and online experience.

- We’ve been telling you that the IUPUI split was not and would not be proceeding as smoothly as the state’s flagship research universities insisted it would when the surprise historic announcement was made. Inside Higher Ed’s **Josh Moody** now takes the most in-depth look to date on the hard choices soon to face many faculty members amidst the IUPUI split, concerned that “they’ll be left without tenure or a departmental home” as Indiana University and Purdue University “dissolve their joint venture in Indianapolis” by fall 2024. “The mutually agreed-upon divorce would make both institutions stronger, officials proclaimed, and IUPUI faculty leaders believed at the time that jobs would be preserved amid the split. Now, with the official uncoupling still a year away, faculty members tell Inside Higher Ed that many are at risk of losing their positions or tenure in what **Phillip Goff**, professor of American studies and president of the IUPUI Faculty Council, called an ‘academic bloodbath.’ Goff believes dozens of faculty members face the prospect of job or tenure losses amid the breakup as Purdue absorbs certain departments that are currently staffed by IUPUI employees.

□ Moody describes the “unique structure of IUPUI” which has often seen “Indiana faculty members teach Purdue students. In certain programs, students can earn a degree from either institution on the shared campus, or both if they double major in one program from each. Historically, Indiana has had a greater presence on the shared campus than Purdue. According to a Purdue spokesperson, 74 employees who currently work for Indiana will be affected by the realignment process. But the spokesperson stressed that no job cuts are on the table and tenure will be extended to all faculty who

move over from Indiana. Both universities said that in the end, they will be adding – not cutting – jobs. Many current IUPUI faculty members, however, are unnerved by what they see as unattractive and career-damaging options that will force them to surrender tenure or accept an undefined role at Purdue with no home department and unclear responsibilities.” Goff tells Moody that that “the rehoming process, as it’s being called internally, also comes with threats to tenure that were not delineated last year as part of the institutional divorce. According to multiple sources who spoke with Inside Higher Ed, faculty members are now faced with three options: taking early retirement, relinquishing tenure for a contract position or retaining tenure under the authority of the provost’s office with no departmental home and undefined parameters. Multiple IUPUI faculty members, speaking on condition of anonymity, raised concerns about a process that they believe is unfair and nontransparent. Some suggested possible age or gender discrimination, arguing that older and female professors are underrepresented among those being offered departmental tenure in the transition to Purdue. (A Purdue spokesperson told Inside Higher Ed by email that “any accusation of discrimination at departmental votes is ridiculous and patently false.”) Faculty members also worry about what moving to Purdue without a departmental home or clear tenure option might mean for access to lab space and research grants.”

□ Moody also finds that “Beyond their displeasure with the options, faculty members are also frustrated with the realignment process itself, which one professor called “unfair, subjective and nontransparent.” Faculty members argue they are being evaluated for departmental tenure based on unclear criteria, with no explanation for denials and no opportunity to appeal Purdue’s decisions.” “In an internal email, Purdue administrators sought to reassure those affected by the program changes, emphasizing that job and tenure losses were not part of the overall plan. “In short, there will be (1) no reduction of workforce, (2) no change for current tenured and tenure-track faculty to rank, compensation, or the location and type of research and teaching, and (3) even though the tenure cases were voted by IU, Purdue has nonetheless elected, as part of its agreement with IU to facilitate a transition to a new university, to provide tenure to those currently with IU tenure, and tenure-track assistant professor positions to those currently on tenure-track,” Senior Vice Provost **David Umulis** wrote to affected faculty members [in mid-July].”

□ Moody’s piece concludes this way: “For now, many faculty members are mulling their options. Several told Inside Higher Ed they are undecided and considering early retirement or seeking positions elsewhere. One faculty member said they felt ‘abandoned by Indiana and rejected by Purdue.’ Even as faculty members meet with senior administrators ... to learn their fate, it remains unclear how many have been rejected for departmental tenure at Purdue. While officials have indicated

that the realignment process will become clear following the conclusion of those meetings, many faculty members still don’t know where they’ll be when fall 2024 arrives. ‘We’re completely in the dark about what is going on, what has gone on, what is going to be the future. We’re the people that are most affected, and yet none of our input has been taken,’ said one faculty member who has been looking for a new job since the IUPUI split was announced.”

- The Indiana Commission for Higher Education launches of a new planning tool for the Indiana College Core. The site, My College Core, allows students, families, and school counselors to access information regarding college-level coursework, including dual credit, dual enrollment, Advanced Placement, and College-Level Examination Program.

- Students who utilize the tool can build plans specific to the college-level coursework offered at their high school. The new tool also allows students to communicate their plans with parents/guardians and school counselors. As students complete coursework they can track their progress toward completing the Indiana College Core certificate.

### *IN Policy . . .*

- The Indiana State University Board of Trustees adds a seven-member Subcommittee for Minoritized Faculty as a “Recognized Faculty Affinity Group.”

- Purdue University implements new, reduced speed limits for several streets surrounding the university’s West Lafayette campus, hoping to improve pedestrian safety. The reduced speed limits have been approved by the West Lafayette Traffic Commission. New speed limit signs were being installed during July, with all of them expected to be in place by early this month.

- Indiana State University tells the university community that it is monitoring a nationwide data security breach – that did not occur on ISU’s systems – that has implications for ISU. The National Student Clearinghouse (NSC), a third-party provider of student data reporting, and the Pension Benefit Information, LLC (PBI), a vendor of ISU’s employee benefit plan provider, TIAA, tells ISU that they have been affected by a MOVEit Transfer file transfer software data security breach. Vendors advise that they were using MOVEit Transfer in connection with personal information received from ISU and that certain personal and student information received from ISU has been subject to the MOVEit Transfer breach.

- ISU that is one of the 3,600 colleges and universities that works with NSC to gather student data as required by the U.S. Department of Education. NSC reports that an unauthorized party obtained certain files transferred within

the Clearinghouse’s MOVEit environment, including files containing personal information from the student record database on current and former ISU students.

- Former vice president (and Indiana governor) **Mike Pence** (R) tells Semafor in an interview that the Biden Administration civil rights inquiry into legacy admissions at Harvard University “feels like another example of Biden bullying private academic institutions or public institutions of higher education. Look, my first full time job after college was an admissions counselor,” he says of his work at his alma mater, Hanover College. “I’d rather leave our universities to establish the criteria for admission, without the heavy hand of government. But I really do believe that, while there may well have been a day that we needed affirmative action to correct historic wrongs and to ensure access, I think that that day is over. And I truly do believe that the Supreme Court’s step has moved us toward a more perfect union than ideal of a colorblind society. And I celebrate it.”

## *IN Academic Programs & Degrees . . .*

- The Higher Learning Commission, an entity that reviews the colleges and ensures institution quality, finds that Ivy Tech Community College meets all accreditation criteria, which include alignment to mission, commitment to the public good, ethical and responsible conduct, academic rigor, and alignment of faculty and staff needed for effective, high-quality programs and student services. Ivy Tech President **Sue Ellspermann** says that an institution fulfilling all criteria “is a rare accomplishment . . .” The accreditation process is required by the U.S. Department of Education for postsecondary institutions to participate in federal financial aid programs. Ivy Tech is in the fourth year of its 10-year accreditation cycle. The next comprehensive evaluation will occur in late 2028 or early 2029.

- Indiana Wesleyan University-National & Global unwraps a new doctoral program in business administration with a specialization in data analytics. This advanced degree prepares students for acceleration in the careers of business education, consulting, and business leadership. The IWU doctoral program requires 60 credits which can be finished in as few as 36 months.

- The Indiana State University Board of Trustees approves a non-degree Mild Intervention Graduate Licensure Program. This is an 18-credit hour program that will lead to P-12 license in Exceptional Needs: Mild Intervention. The program is designed for teachers who currently have an active teaching license and seek an additional licensure in special education.

- Pilotsmith and Purdue Global enter a partnership under which students accepted into the Purdue Global professional

flight degree program will complete their bachelor of science degree courses online through Purdue Global, while completing professional flight training at Pilotsmith, Purdue Global’s newest flight training partner.

- Students who complete all five flight certifications/ratings – private pilot certification, instrument rating, commercial pilot certification, certified flight instructor and multiengine flight rating – will receive 45 college credits from Purdue Global toward their bachelor’s degree in professional flight, equivalent to one year of college credits. Students who have college credits from previous schools may also receive additional transfer credits, thereby saving them more money and allowing them to graduate faster.

- Pilotsmith students, employees, and immediate family members (spouse, domestic partner, children, siblings, and parents) are eligible for a tuition incentive package for undergraduate and graduate degrees and certificates.

- Indiana Wesleyan University partners with Republic Airways to offer an online Associate of Science degree in Aviation Operations as a non-pilot pathway for those interested in working in aviation with on-the-ground technology and communication.

- Ivy Tech Community College returns Criminal Justice and Legal Studies programs to its Michigan City campus.

## *IN Facilities & Construction . . .*

- Indiana State University will request the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, the State Budget Committee, and the State Budget Agency to authorize the spending of \$66,000,000 for the renovation and expansion of the Technology Annex for the Center for Technology, Engineering, & Design and improvements in the adjacent Myers Technology Center . . . as well as for the following projects totaling \$1,932,790 from ISU’s repair and rehabilitation appropriation:

Landini Center for Performing and Fine Arts Reroof	\$ 1,100,000
Electrical Voltage System Repairs	\$ 600,000
Mechanical/HVAC Repairs/Replacement	\$ 232,790
<i>Total</i>	<b>\$ 1,932,790</b>

- On the August 4 agenda for the State Budget Committee are a pair of university capital projects.

- Ball State University requests BudCom authorization to proceed with the renovation of approximately 358,463 square feet inside the University Theater, Hargreaves Music Building, the Arts and Communications Building, and the Architecture Building The North Campus Buildings Renovation Project had been appropriated \$81,600,000 in the new state budget. BSU

says that the requested improvements will help modernize the facilities, “allowing the programs housed in these buildings to deliver an education designed to meet our state’s workforce needs, with the flexibility to adjust to meet future needs.” This project includes improvements to the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing system; life safety features; ADA accessibility; and fire protection systems. The renovation will improve and modernize classroom space and support areas to improve student learning and meet current regulations for various programs.

□ Vincennes University requests authorization to proceed with the construction of approximately 70,000 square feet Center for Health Sciences and Active Learning. This project had been appropriated \$33,900,000 in the new state budget. VU says that construction of the Center will create state-of-the-art clinical lab simulations and pharmacy technology labs equipped with high-fidelity manikins, virtual reality simulators, hospital beds, and video recording systems. This construction will further modernize classroom space and support areas to improve student learning and meet growing demands of the health programs.

- Indiana University will host an August 8 matchmaking event from 10:30 a.m. to noon at the Indiana State Museum for prospective vendors to learn more about the new IU Health South Support Building Project and Bid Package Two.

- An Indiana University School of Medicine-led program is helping provide housing for pregnant women who are housing insecure or homeless in a novel approach to improve birth outcomes in Indianapolis via the provision of housing, social support, and advocacy. Healthy Beginnings at Home (HBAH) Intervention provides housing navigation services, 24 months of rental assistance, and case management services. The Health Justice Intervention aims to prevent evictions of low-income pregnant women by working with members of the judiciary.

□ Participants in HBAH must be in their first or second trimester, over age 18, experiencing housing insecurity and CareSource Medicaid members. The women receive full rental assistance for 15 months, then tapered rental assistance for another nine months. Six women are enrolled in the program so far, with a goal of 100 women being helped over five years. Housing navigation is provided by RDOOR Housing Corporation, and the rental assistance portion of the program is currently being supported by the Indiana Department of Health, CareSource Foundation, and Birge & Held Asset Management.

□ The program is funded by a five-year, \$2.4 million Housing Equity for Infant Health grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration. IU School of Medicine is collaborating with RDOOR, the Indiana Justice Project, Birge

& Held Asset Management, Wheeler Mission, CareSource, Coalition for Homelessness Intervention and Prevention, Indiana Department of Health, Prosperity Indiana, and the City of Indianapolis Mayor’s Office.

## *IN Gifts and Fundraising . . .*

- Purdue University hits a new high in gift funding for the fiscal year that ran from July 1, 2022, through June 30, tallying a record \$610 million in private contributions from 83,836 donors, surpassing \$600 million in a year for the first time. FY 2023 is the 11th consecutive year that the total raised for student support has increased. Purdue raised \$183 million for student support – a 22% increase over the prior year. Records that Purdue donors set this year include:

- Total dollars raised: \$610.3 million, an increase of 12.6% from last year’s total and the previous record of \$542.1 million.

- Dollars raised for student support: \$183 million, up from last year’s record of \$150 million. The university has seen a giant leap in private support for scholarships, fellowships and student programming each year since 2012-13, when Purdue raised \$32 million for student support.

- Largest single-day fundraising campaign in higher education: \$110.8 million from Purdue Day of Giving, shattering last year’s record of \$68.2 million and bringing Purdue Day of Giving’s cumulative total since it launched in 2014 to \$420.5 million.

- Indiana State University’s Be So BOLD Campaign, publicly launched in September 2022, raised \$30,017,943 in Fiscal Year 2023, the highest annual fundraising amount in the university’s history and the first time ISU has surpassed the \$30 million mark in any year. During the Be So BOLD Campaign, the university has set a goal of raising \$100 million by June 30, 2025, with a focus on student scholarships, experiential learning, Sycamore Athletics, and faculty excellence.

□ More than 6,800 donors made financial contributions to Indiana State in the last year; 1,200 of which were recognized as members of the President’s Society, which requires contributing at least \$1,000 in the fiscal year. ISU notes that 1,565 of those donors did so for the first time during the year, and 2,220 reside in the Wabash Valley. The local community contributed \$4.5 million to support Sycamores.

□ Gifts to the university’s endowment totaled more than \$12.6 million and 19 new endowed funds were created, providing more scholarship opportunities to current and future Sycamores.

- In recognition of a generous gift commitment from Heritage Federal Credit Union to the University of Southern Indiana Foundation, the Varsity Club Suite in USI’s Screaming Eagles Arena has been named the Heritage Varsity Club Suite.

- Yahoo Sports reports that the University of Notre Dame and apparel manufacturer Under Armour have agreed upon a 10-year, \$100 million licensing extension deal for UND sports teams that will be worth more than \$10 million annually to the university in cash and merchandise. FrontOfficeSports tips that this is “believed to be the richest such deal in college sports,” and notes that this “is the first major piece of new business for the school since its recently announced athletics leadership transition from **Jack Swarbrick** to former NBC Sports chairman **Pete Bevacqua**.”

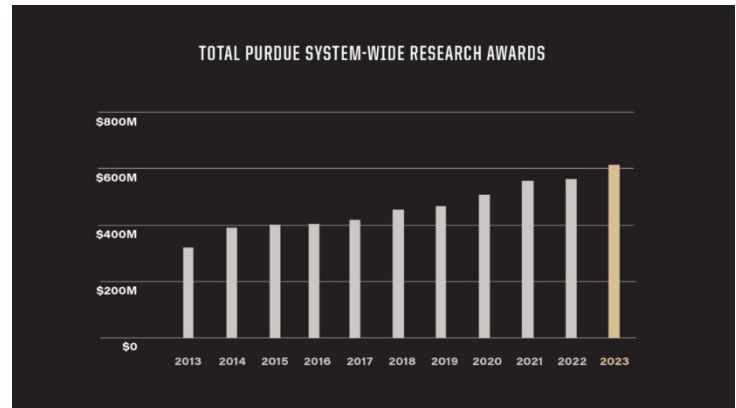
- The Indianapolis-based National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I Board of Directors directs the Division I Council to develop proposals to improve the environment for student-athletes engaging in name, image and likeness (NIL) activities in college sports. The board met virtually Wednesday. FrontOfficeSports reports Thursday that “the NCAA appears to finally be recognizing it may have to take action on its own if Congress doesn’t.” “We heard loud and clear that student-athletes are not always certain about what to look for in NIL contracts, and we hope to establish clear rules that help student-athletes navigate these deals to better – and more safely –capitalize on their NIL potential,” says **Lynda Tealer**, chair of the Division I Council and the working group, and executive associate athletics director at the University of Florida. “The rules are based on feedback the NCAA received during two days of meetings at the end of July, from college sports administrators and 10 Division I athletes,” according to FrontOfficeSports. Among the proposals the working group will present to the council in October are rules that would:

- Develop a registration process for NIL service providers (such as agents and financial advisors) and NIL entities (those who contract with student-athletes for the use of their NIL).
- Create a standardized contract or standard contract terms that could include certain information to be required, including terms like fee structures and the specific activities for which athletes would be compensated.
- Establish disclosure requirements for student-athletes and/or NIL entities that could serve as a resource for student-athletes and would be intended to provide transparency about NIL activities.

## IN Research and Innovation . . .

- Purdue University hits new milestones in research awards for the fiscal year that ran from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023, receiving \$613 million in research awards during that

period, topping \$600 million for the first time. The university’s total research awards have steadily climbed each year since 2013m, and the FY 2023 total represents nine percent growth in awards from fiscal FY 2022 – and a 92% hike over the last 11 years, with the most recent year’s funding supporting approximately 3,500 research projects. This year’s funding is benchmarked as high for a university without either a medical school or a major U.S. Department of Defense establishment.



- As part of this record funding, Purdue has seen a significant uptick in larger awards from federal agencies through competitive processes, which account for 70% of the research funding at Purdue, with the U.S. Department of Defense topping the list for the first time at \$98 million. Other top sponsors include the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including the National Institute of Health (\$95 million); National Science Foundation (\$81 million); U.S. Department of Agriculture (\$62 million); U.S. Department of Energy (\$41 million) and state and local government (\$43 million).

- Private industry also contributed nearly \$90 million to support Purdue research, with the university signing 11 master research agreements, including a new commitment of \$50 million from Eli Lilly and Company toward a five-year strategic research collaboration.

- Indiana University Kokomo Chancellor **Mark Canada** is among a group of experts sharing student success research in a recently published book. Chancellor Canada co-authored a chapter about experiential learning, drawing from his leadership of the Kokomo Experience and You (KEY) program – which provides students with a wide range of unique, hands-on experiential learning opportunities close to home, across the country, and around the world – for *Radical Reimagining for Student Success in Higher Education*, published by Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

- “Our purpose in publishing the book is to give faculty and administrators tools to work with to make the educational experience better for their students,” says Canada, noting

there is plenty of research available, but this book condenses it to one volume to make it more accessible. “There’s a lot of information to help faculty structure their classrooms and develop experiences for students in a way that is more likely to lead to student success.” The book includes sections about reimagining institutions, and looking at policies, data, and analytic strategies to drive student and institutional success; reimagining the student experience, including learning, support structures, and the personnel process; and reimagining higher education, including its culture.

### *IN Courts and Conduct . . .*

- With the assistance of Terre Haute attorney **Jim Bopp, Jr.**, a top national First Amendment attorney whose firm is under retainer to the Office of the Attorney General, University of Notre Dame Professor of Global Affairs and Sociology **Tamara Kay** files a defamation lawsuit against the *Irish Rover*, UND’s student-run newspaper, in St. Joseph County Superior Court 4. *Kay v. The Irish Rover*, No.71D04-2305-CT-000264.

- Professor Kay alleges the paper’s coverage of her abortion-rights work contained “false and defamatory” information, contending that reporters had misinterpreted a sign on her office door (“This a SAFE SPACE to get help and information on ALL Healthcare issues and access – confidentially and with care and compassion”) about helping students access healthcare in view of what she saw as inadequate resources and support for student survivors of sexual assault, and denying a pair of quotes about academic freedom and her work at a Catholic institution made at a Notre Dame College Democrats event. The student paper denies the allegations and has filed a motion to dismiss, citing Indiana’s Anti-SLAPP statute, which is designed to protect defendants from being sued for effectively raising issues protecting the public good.

- Professor Kay tells the court that she “has been harassed, threatened, and experienced damage to her residential property” and “continues to experience mental anguish” because of the paper’s coverage in October and March.

- According to the Associated Press nationally, “The case is raising questions about press freedom and academic freedom at one of the nation’s preeminent Catholic universities.” **Carl R. Trueman**, a professor of biblical and religious studies at Grove City College and a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center, pens a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed in which he notes the value of “fruitful intellectual dialogue” in the classroom, and not “groupthink,” a precept that “applies across ideological lines.” “This is basic to the kind of dialogue that is necessary in the classroom and on campus for the promotion of true intellectual engagement rather than rote learning,” Trueman adds, and “This makes events at Notre Dame significant. The possibility of professors’ suing students will have a chilling

effect on academic freedom and the integrity of any religiously affiliated school. Probably few professors would contemplate legal action against students, but what student will want to take the risk? And where do the boundaries of challenges to the professor’s teaching lie? In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, or in the pungency of whatever argument a lawyer might make in court?” He concludes, “Student newspapers need press freedom if academic freedom is to mean anything – just as professors who teach at religious institutions must forgo unlimited academic freedom if the schools’ religion is to mean anything.”

- Attorney Bopp, however, takes a more focused view: “If we fail, it will send the message that if you speak out about the abortion issue, then you risk punishment through the legal system, and particularly if you speak out on the pro-life side,” he tells AP.

- Three women’s soccer players – two of whom are current Butler student-athletes – file suit for negligence, battery, assault and intentional infliction of emotional distress against Butler University in U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Indiana alleging sexual assault by an athletic trainer employed by the university. The suits contain similar allegations contending that the trainer, **Michael Howell**, a co-defendant, sexually assaulted them during treatment sessions, and details complaints that had also been made against Howell by five other women. Howell worked at Butler from 2012 until he was placed on leave in October 2021. Howell was directly supervised by Butler Senior Associate Athletic Director **Ralph Reiff**, also a co-defendant. Women’s soccer coaches **Tari St. John** and **Robert Alman**, who both also supervised Howell, are not named as defendants in the legal action.

- The federal complaints “detail a culture in which Howell enjoyed a close relationship with one of the team’s coaches, wielded power over athletes’ treatment and playing time,” and openly conducted his assaults and intimidation., The Athletic reports. “The complaint stated that Howell was alerted to the Title IX investigation prior to the school contacting law enforcement or seizing his work-issued phone, ‘allowing Howell to destroy and/or transfer likely lurid photographs and videos taken of the athletes.’”

- The Athletic adds that “According to Jane Doe 1’s lawsuit, a five-month-long Title IX investigation was performed into the allegations. A panel of outside attorneys tasked with presiding over a five-day hearing on the allegations against Howell determined that Jane Doe 1 ‘was slowly and steadily isolated, stalked and manipulated’ in an ‘unconscionably abusive environment,’ and that Howell ‘sexually assaulted, sexually harassed and stalked Ms. Doe,’ and had ‘sexually assaulted and harassed other young women on the soccer team,’ citing a ‘widespread pattern of inappropriate conduct.’



According to the complaint, Butler and Reiff ‘ignored’ NCAA warnings about potential staff-on-student-athlete abuse and the need for policies and training to prevent any such abuse from happening. Additionally, the complaint claims that the university and Reiff breached their duties by ‘permitting Howell to provide treatment to female athletes ... in his private hotel room without staff or a third person present,’ failing to protect student-athletes with appropriate protocols and policies, failing to prevent him from approaching female student-athletes after his alleged misconduct was reported and failing to prevent him from ‘destroying and deleting photographs, videos and others evidence from his university-issued cell phone.’ ”

## *IN Transition . . .*

- **Susan Preble** will leave her post as the top fiscal analyst for the Senate Democratic Caucus after 15 years to join Indiana State University as the new assistant to the president for state government relations on September 18. Preble, who earned her B.A. in political science, an MPA, and a law degree from Indiana University, also served on the Revenue Forecast Technical Committee. Working with Senate Democrats, she oversaw fiscal policy for the caucus, focusing on state and local tax policy, education, and the state budget. She also helped staff the Senate Committee on Appropriations and the senate Committee on Tax and Fiscal Policy and the State Budget Committee.

- Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College interim president **Brennan Randolph** makes changes in the President’s Cabinet for the 2023-24 academic year. Members of the Cabinet include:

- **Janet Clark**, Ph.D., provost, executive vice president for academic affairs; and **Karen Dyer**, M.Ed., Executive Vice President for Advancement and Strategic Initiatives – Clark and Dyer have served on the Cabinet for multiple years. Their roles will elevate this year to executive vice president. In the previous fiscal year, Dyer took on additional duties overseeing conferences and events. Dr. Clark will begin overseeing institutional research beginning this academic year.

- Chief Financial Officer **Traci Tucker** ’84, joined the college in April, and assumed the role of CFO and treasurer in May after serving as CFO for the Sisters of Providence for several years. She will lead the accounting office and guide all financial matters.

- **Frankie Enochs** ’93, MBA, MSIT, will assume the role of vice president for institutional technologies and operations. Enochs joined SMWC in September 2018 as executive director of information technology, tasked with creating a stronger culture of innovation on campus.. Soon after starting at The Woods, she created the 1:1 technology program, TREES, providing students with a basic level of technology. She has

invested time in the college’s information security program in addition to internal training on data protection. Enochs will oversee the departments of information technology, facilities, and public safety.

- **Darla Hopper**, MLD, FAAC, will join the Cabinet as the interim vice president for enrollment management. Hopper has spent much of her career in the field of financial aid and has been the supervisor for the Fellowship of Christian Athletes at SMWC for the last two years.

- Martin University adds **John Girton, Jr.** as its new executive vice president and chief of staff. Girton previously served as the university’s vice president of marketing, communications and external relations, and will be responsible for handling policy matters and institutional events on behalf of Martin’s president and CEO. Girton’s experience includes serving as lead pastor of Indianapolis’ Christ Missionary Baptist Church and as an instructor and creative media services director for Tennessee State University.

- Trine University promotes **Gretchen Miller** to the new role of senior vice president and chief operating officer. Miller, who has been with the university since 2011, served for the last four years as vice president for administration and chief of staff.

- In her new role, Miller will lead or assist in the management of day-to-day operations at Trine University. She will continue her participation with senior officials in institutional planning, including property acquisition and large capital construction efforts on the Angola campus. She also will continue to play a role in policy development and problem resolution. She will serve as the president’s primary liaison with the university, government and community leadership, and continue to serve as chief aide and liaison to the University Board of Trustees. She will be the university’s chief development officer, overseeing and leading the Office of University Advancement. In addition, she will continue her oversight of Trine Innovation 1, which includes Career Services and the Trine Center for Technical Training, and leadership of the university’s camps, conferences and events team, including the T. Furth Center for Performing Arts.

- Ivy Tech Community College Fort Wayne and Warsaw selects **Tracy Davis** as the first executive director of community relations, diversity, equity, and belonging, a role in which she’ll work to create an inclusive environment on campus and with community partners to promote diversity initiatives.

- Davis has worked at Ivy Tech since 2016 as director of community engagement, and has served on Ivy Tech Fort Wayne’s Diversity Council for several years. She earlier worked at WorkOne Northeast for 10 years.

- Indiana University names **Sean Kilpatrick** as associate vice president for University Enrollment Services, a division within the university-wide office of the vice president for student success. University Enrollment Services supports the academic and student services missions of Indiana University by providing strategic leadership in partnership with campus enrollment leaders, while also implementing major student enrollment projects and initiatives on all IU campuses. The division coordinates and manages shared services operations in admissions, transfer operations, financial aid, student records, student demographics, access administration and veterans affairs.

- Kilpatrick comes to IU from the University of Miami in Florida, where he served as executive director of the university's one-stop shop "Canes Central," which oversaw consolidated operations for four offices: Registrar, Financial Aid, Student Accounts and University ID. Before that, Kilpatrick served as assistant dean of students and post-graduate support services in the School of Nursing and Health Studies at the University of Miami. He holds a bachelor's degree and a Master of Science in education, both from the University of Miami.

- **Richard House** receives a promotion to associate dean for professional development at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, succeeding inaugural associate dean **Ella Ingram**, who will return to the faculty as a professor of biology and biomedical engineering.

- Dr. House, who has served as head of the Department of Humanities, Social Sciences and the Arts since 2017, will organize programs supporting faculty members in bringing innovations to their classrooms. An English professor at Rose-Hulman since 2001, Dr. House was a member of a faculty/staff committee that supported the college's successful Mission Driven Campaign for Rose-Hulman and has contributed to several of the college's academic initiatives.

- **Dr. Aaron C. Slocum** is named associate vice president for student affairs at Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College. Slocum most recently was the director of equity, access, retention and mentoring at Indiana State University, from which he earned his Ph.D. in educational leadership and higher education, and his master's degree in student affairs and higher education. During his 11 years at ISU, he held positions ranging from area coordinator of residential life, program coordinator for 21st Century Scholars, director of the mentoring center, and interim director of equity and inclusion.

- In his new post, Dr. Slocum will oversee student life, residential life, SMWC counseling center, campus minister's office, student organizations, student health and commuter student resources.

- Indiana University Kokomo selects **Andréa Halpin** as its next dean of students. Halpin has been director of the Grace Scholars program at Mount Mary University in Milwaukee and assistant director of student engagement for co-curricular involvement at Missouri State University. In her new role at IUK, Halpin will oversee student life programming, support services including career services and campus diversity, and administer the Student Code of Conduct.

- The new associate dean and director of the White Lodging School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Purdue University Northwest will be **Kwangsoo Park**, who comes from North Dakota State University, where he led the apparel, merchandising, interior design, and hospitality management department. Before his tenure at NDSU, he was the coordinator for the tourism and hospitality management program at Black Hills State University in South Dakota. Park, who serves as president of the Korea-American Hospitality and Tourism Educators Association also brings nine years of professional experience in hospitality, tourism and event management in South Korea and the U.S. to the post.

- Ivy Tech Community College Madison adds three individuals to the leadership team.

- **Dr. Jason James, Jr.**, vice chancellor of academic affairs, comes to Ivy Tech from Neumann University where he served as an associate professor and executive director of graduate education programs. Dr. James was also an associate professor in the College of Business at Wilmington University. Prior to his higher education career, Dr. James was a vice president in human resources at Bank of New York Mellon.

- **Carol Brown**, executive director of Ivy+ Career Link, arrives at Ivy Tech from Indiana Wesleyan University, where she led the Life Calling & Career team for OMIT for more than 10 years. She has taught as an adjunct in the design technology program at the Bloomington Ivy Tech campus location while pursuing her graduate degree in interior architecture from Indiana University.

- **Kate Sutter**, director of development, joins Ivy Tech from Norton King's Daughters' Health in Madison where she was the foundation and giving coordinator.

- The University of Notre Dame picks **Michael C. O'Malley** as executive director of the Fitzgerald Institute for Real Estate (FIRE). O'Malley brings more than 25 years of real estate, entrepreneurship and investment experience to the role, and will take the point for UND in external engagement with the real estate industry.

## IN Workforce Development

### IN General . . .

- Seeking to improve digital literacy, Comcast contributes \$50,000 to The Literacy Alliance of Fort Wayne to advance economic opportunity through digital literacy and broadband adoption. To directly address the issue of upgrading technology for those in need, Comcast also donates 250 laptops to the Fort Wayne Housing Authority, Fort Wayne Boys and Girls Club, St. Joseph Mission, the Fort Wayne Urban League, and the Literacy Alliance of Fort Wayne.

- EmployIndy, Marion County’s Workforce Development Board, adds **Ken Clark** as executive vice president, finance and operations, a post from which he will lead all aspects of the organization’s financial, administrative, operational and human resources strategy, systems and protocols. Clark joins EmployIndy from the City of Indianapolis and Marion County, where he spent more than three years as the city controller and director of the office of finance and management.

- The *Wall Street Journal* Wednesday takes a look at how remote learning during the pandemic left students short of basic skills, and tells readers that “Last year, Ivy Tech Community College, the largest nursing program in Indiana, embedded tutors in classrooms to assist lagging students with skills they should have mastered in high school. Some of the most basic included the math necessary to figure out correct dosages for medicine. **Joseph Mulumba**, who is about to start his sophomore year in the Ivy Tech nursing program, was a high-school sophomore in Indiana when the pandemic arrived. His school was remote for a year. ‘I feel like I would have learned a lot more if not for the pandemic,’ Mulumba said. ‘When I got here I realized I wasn’t ready for nursing school. I realized I didn’t know how to study.’”

- U.S. Rep. **Erin Houchin** (R), a member of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce Subcommittee on Higher Education and Workforce Development, introduces the “Prioritizing Evidence for Workforce Development Act.” The measure would require workforce development funding be prioritized for programs with proven success, such as, she points out, the Goodwill Excel Center in Clarksville.

- “Throughout my travels across the district and meeting with business owners, workforce shortages are always at the top of their list of challenges,” says Rep. Houchin. “That’s why my first bill in this committee focuses on re-engaging the 10 million American adults who are not participating in the workforce. We have seen successful models like Goodwill Excel Centers that educate and assist with the employment of non-traditional students. This bill ensures these and other programs like it will be prioritized in receiving funding through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) reauthorization. This will be a big first step toward rebuilding the economy and growing the workforce, and I thank Senator Braun for working with me on this important issue,” adds Rep. Houchin. U.S. Sen. **Mike Braun** (R) introduced the Senate version of this legislation earlier this year, and U.S. Rep. **Larry Bucshon** (R) is a House bill co-sponsor.

- In April, Rep. Houchin visited the Excel Center in Clarksville, and then in May she highlighted the Excel Center’s work in the House Education and Workforce panel as she discussed the need to improve the current skills gap and address the workforce shortage. “I’ve been there and seen it firsthand and the Goodwill Excel Center is doing amazing work by taking that marginalized population and providing them an education and opportunities that they might not otherwise have,” Rep. Houchin told colleagues in the hearing. “We applaud and appreciate Congresswoman Houchin for introducing this common-sense change to our adult education system,” says Goodwill Excel Center National Office Senior Vice President **Betsy Delgado**.



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“Prioritizing improvements based on evidence will help students and families achieve economic prosperity. As a provider of adult education through Adult High Schools, we welcome the increased emphasis on ensuring that our programs are serving our clients well.”

□ WIOA, enacted in 2014, was the most recent update of the public workforce system and was designed to connect skilled workers with employers. “Too many times in government, we continue to throw money at programs without much thought to tying funding to the outcomes we seek to achieve,” laments Rep. Houchin. “Previous workforce reform prioritized connecting job seekers to employers. In today’s economy, if you are seeking a job, you can find one. The current workforce challenges have outgrown the 2014 WIOA, and we must change our approach. This legislation is one piece of our plan aimed squarely at that goal,” she adds.

## *IN Job Training & Education . . .*

- The Knox Community School Corporation (in Starke County) enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with Vincennes University (in Knox County) that will allow students the opportunity to earn dual credit for college courses through VU.
- Televerde opens of a new contact center at the Indiana Women’s Prison in Indianapolis, adding to the company’s existing Indiana operations in the Rockville Correctional Facility (opened in 2015) and the Madison Correctional Facility (opened in 2019), and expanding its nationwide network to eight prison-operated centers. With this expansion, Televerde now provides career opportunities to 127 women across its Indiana operations, working toward rehabilitation and reintegration of incarcerated. Televerde initially hired nine women to staff the new Indianapolis facility, with plans to rapidly expand its workforce.
- The Hearts In Motion nonprofit organization based in Northwest Indiana opens its first trade school. The Maria Felicitas Diego Morales Trade School in Schererville provides almost 20,000 square feet of space for students to

learn a career in welding and become self-sufficient. The initiative will make available a full-time licensed welding instructor to the first class of five students, with the school offering five workbenches, safety equipment (helmets, head gear, gloves, etc.) , a grinder, welding machine, hacksaw, and other small tools. Trades other than welding are expected to be added to the curriculum going forward. Classes are held five days per week with an anonymous donor responsible for the start-up.

- Southwest Allen County Schools receives a \$192,000 award from the Don Wood Foundation to fully equip a lab for industrial technology classes with milling machines, lathes, bandsaws, sanders, drill presses, and other metal and woodworking tools, and another \$58,000 for robotic manufacturing equipment. The lab will be housed in a section of Homestead High School that awaits a build-out for the new function.

## *IN Postsecondary Training . . .*

- Look for a broad coalition of more than 500 trade groups, professional societies, and companies to form “a new advocacy group to lobby the expansion of 529 education savings plans to include costs for obtaining or maintaining postsecondary credentials,” reports POLITICO Influence. The legislation that the group will be backing: a bipartisan, bicameral measure whose Senate version is co-authored by U.S. Sen. **Mike Braun** (R) and U.S. Sen. **Amy Klobuchar** (D-MN) “aiming to rebrand 529 plans from ‘college savings plans’ to ‘career savings plans.’”
- The White River Valley School District Board of School Trustees enters into a partnership with Wagler Education and Training Center in Lyons for no-cost school bus driver training, aimed at earning CDL-B and school bus driver certifications. Individuals starting training in September can receive certification by Thanksgiving.

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