

ADVOCATE

AN INDIANA STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION

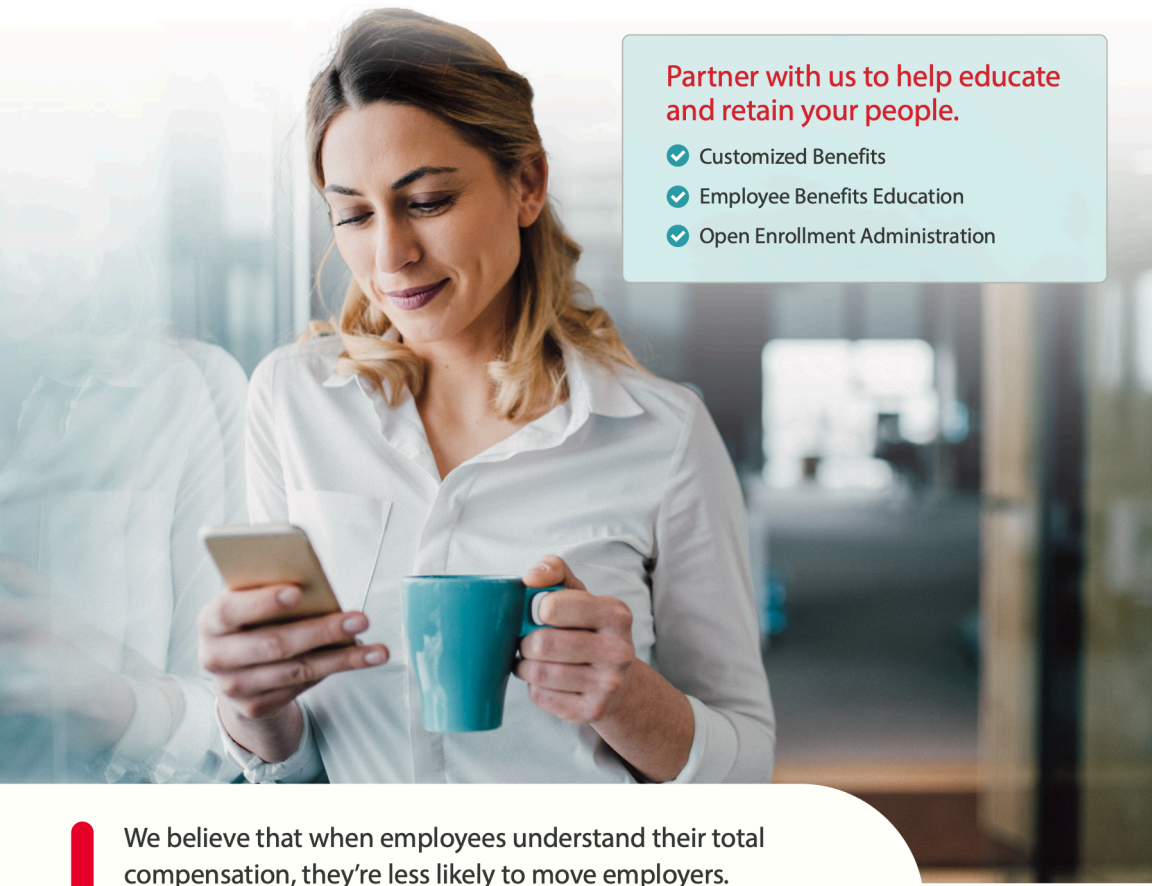


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a different opinion

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We'd love to hear from you!

Are you passionate about defending public education, advocating for equitable schools, building strong locals, protecting our future, culturally responsive teaching or new education trends? Email us at communications@ista-in.org to contribute to *The Advocate*.

The *Advocate* is the official quarterly publication of the Indiana State Teachers Association, the state level of the United Education Profession. The content of the Association's publications will be consistent with its mission, strategic objectives and policies.

Winter 2026:
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PURPOSE, MISSION AND GOALS

PURPOSE

To advocate for and advance the interests of Indiana's students, educators and public schools.

MISSION

The Indiana State Teachers Association is a professional association organized to sustain quality public education, improve students' educational opportunities and advance the professional status of educators.

GOALS

- Unify our voices — we are stronger together.
- Provide economic security and professional working conditions for educators.
- Create a premier public education system that serves all kids regardless of ZIP code, culture or ability.
- Fight for racial and social justice.

Greetings, fellow ISTA members!

A new year always brings with it a new start full of new possibilities. As you bring those new possibilities to life with your students in your classroom, on your bus, in your cafeteria or on your playground, I hope that your semester is off to a fantastic start.



Jennifer Smith-Margraf, ISTA President

A new year also brings new possibilities for union activism and advocacy. As the legislative session moves into full swing, there are many ways for members to be involved in advocating for our students, for our profession and for public education. Legislators and community members need to hear directly from educators how our schools and our students are affected by the policy decisions our state legislature makes. Whether you come to the State House or advocate back home in your community, your voice and your story matter.

Members also can help create and shape ISTA and NEA policy as representatives to the ISTA and NEA Representative Assemblies. I encourage you to reach out to your local president about when the elections for these positions will be held for your local and to ensure that these important positions are filled. As a member-led organization, it's vital that all of our locals are represented as we elect state and national officers, approve our budget and vote on new business items. I hope that this year continues to bring you new possibilities.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer Smith-Margraf". The script is fluid and cursive.

Jennifer Smith-Margraf
ISTA President



BUILDING WHILE FLYING:

REDISCOVERING JOY AMID BURNOUT



SAMANTHA VENDERLEY

Samantha Venderley is a member of Jasper CTA. She is an English teacher at Jasper High School.

After 10 years of teaching ELA, I thought I **was immune to burnout**. Then I took on the task of building a new future teacher pathway—and suddenly, **a wave of dread crept in that I had never felt before**.

“You might be experiencing burnout if you dread the workday, feel detached from your students or notice that your patience has worn thin. It’s not a sign of weakness—it’s a signal your body and mind need care” (Pitt State Career Development Blog, 2024).

I was supposed to be the **“mayor of education,” the unstoppable Miss Frizzle of joy**. What changed? I realized **I was building the airplane while flying it**. Some mornings, it takes everything I have just to sit in the car and gather enough energy to walk inside. If that sounds familiar, you’re not alone. **Burnout isn’t failure—it’s our body’s way of saying something has to change**.

I missed my **comfort zone, my sense of community and the joy of collaboration**. The grass isn’t greener on the other side—it’s greener where you water it. So, I’m learning to build what I need: **connection, balance and boundaries**.

The World Health Organization (2019) defines burnout as **exhaustion, mental distance and reduced efficacy**. Researchers Madigan and Kim (2021) describe it as feeling like nothing we do is ever enough. But **slowing down isn’t selfish—it’s survival**. Studies show mindfulness, collaboration and saying “no” to one more committee can help us find balance again (Jennings, 2019; Education Support, n.d.; Annenberg Institute, 2023).

Teaching will always ask for our hearts, but it shouldn’t cost our health. Recognizing burnout isn’t giving up—it’s **how we rediscover joy**.



STRENGTH IN BARGAINING: WINS AMID FISCAL PRESSURE

Despite a challenging economic outlook, ISTA members achieved meaningful progress at the bargaining table this year. With limited increases in the 2026–27 state budget and looming property tax cuts under SEA 1, **educators are still securing contracts that move their schools and profession forward.** The following are just a few examples of the many local successes achieved through persistent advocacy and collaboration.

The Cowan Community CTA and Elwood CTA won new assault and threat leave protections. These provisions ensure teachers can go home with full pay if they are verbally or physically assaulted or credibly threatened at work.

The Evansville TA secured a two-year agreement with \$2,000 raises in each year, higher minimum salaries, expanded compensation for classroom coverage and 15 days of paid parental leave. The agreement represents a major step forward in family-supportive policies.

After years of organizing and legal challenges, the North Newton EA reached a landmark settlement that includes **\$4,100 raises in the first year and \$2,000 in the second, full coverage of health-insurance increases, binding arbitration and dozens of contract improvements.** These range from professional leave for taking the Praxis exam to removing evaluation requirements for raises.

Not every local saw the same level of success this bargaining season. Many faced limited revenue, declining enrollment or administrators unwilling to invest in educators. Still, **each effort at the table—whether it produced a major improvement or simply held the line—builds collective power for the next round of bargaining.**

These highlights represent only a portion of the progress made by ISTA locals this year. While ISTA helps members secure **fair contracts** in their districts, the association is also **fighting for them at the Statehouse** to ensure funding keeps pace with inflation, protect collective bargaining rights and make sure educators' voices are heard at every level.



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LOOKING AHEAD:

ISTA'S PRIORITIES FOR THE 2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION



As ISTA heads into the **2026 legislative session**, we are preparing to bring the voices of educators to the Statehouse to **protect public education and strengthen the profession**. Alongside that advocacy, we will advance a set of priorities grounded in the experiences and concerns that members have shared with us.

The **2026 session is a shorter, non-budget year**, which means legislators typically cannot take up bills that require new state spending. **Teacher pay, school funding and other major fiscal issues** will be central in 2027 when lawmakers write the next state budget. Even in a non-budget year, however, **lawmakers regularly consider policy changes that impact the classroom**. Decisions made this session will have **lasting consequences for educators, students and school communities**.

ISTA's priorities reflect the issues members say matter most in their classrooms and communities. The items below represent **key areas of focus** as part of a broader agenda ISTA will advance throughout the session.

GET INVOLVED: YOUR VOICE SHAPES PUBLIC EDUCATION

Attend ISTA Days of Action

Join fellow educators at the Statehouse to meet with lawmakers, learn about key bills and speak directly on how legislation affects your classroom. Dates will be emailed to members and posted on ISTA's advocacy webpage.

Meet With Lawmakers Back Home

Advocacy does not end in Indianapolis. Request a meeting with your state senator or representative in your community. Conversations outside the Statehouse often have the greatest impact.

Show Up at Legislative Forums,

Town halls, Third House meetings and community forums are opportunities to ask questions, share your experience and keep public education front and center.

Partner With Your UniServ Director

Your UD can help you prepare for a legislator meeting, provide talking points and assist in setting up visits. You do not have to do this alone. ISTA is here to support you every step of the way.

Why It Matters

Lawmakers consistently say educators are among the most credible voices they hear. When members speak up together, they shape the policies that affect students, classrooms and the profession.

ISTA's 2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



STRENGTHENING EDUCATOR AND STUDENT SAFETY

Expand collective bargaining rights so educators, together, have a meaningful voice in decisions affecting teaching, working conditions, and school environments, while strengthening reporting and accountability requirements to ensure violence against educators and school employees is accurately documented and addressed.



IMPROVING STUDENT CLASSROOM CONDITIONS AND STUDENT LEARNING

Establish consistent cell phone and artificial intelligence policies that support learning, protect student privacy, and include educator input. Strengthen reading and math instruction by ensuring free, accessible and flexible professional development for educators.



FIXING TAG AND SUPPORTING FAIR EDUCATOR PAY

Fix the Teacher Appreciation Grant to be fair, collaborative, and supportive of educator morale, and reestablish a Teacher Pay Advisory Board to develop long-term recommendations for raising teacher pay to at least the national average.



PROTECTING AND STRENGTHENING PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

Increase public school funding to address inflation and student needs, and restore local revenues impacted by property tax changes. Ensure excess district reserves are used for classrooms by allowing educators a voice in how those funds are spent.



SUPPORTING ESPS AND RETIREES

Extend Family and Medical Leave Act protections to education support professionals who work at least 120 days a year and update school bus speed laws to improve safety for students and drivers. Provide a second-year 13th check for retired public school employees to help offset inflation, and improve Statehouse accessibility to ensure full participation by educators and the public.



ENSURING VOTER VOICE IN SCHOOL BOARDS

Support school governance models that retain a fully elected school board.



READ MORE

See full list of ISTA's 2026 legislative priorities.

Meet Megan Johnson

2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year

Megan Johnson is a member of Plainfield Prof EA. She is an elementary school teacher at Central Elementary. She was named the 2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year.



Q. What inspired you to want to be an educator?

I think with educators, there's usually one of two answers here. It's "I don't know how I got into this" or "I always knew I wanted to be an educator". I fell on the latter side of that. I literally never thought of anything else. I just knew. I was raised working with other kids. I'm fourth out of five kids in my family. We were heavily involved in church. My mom tutored at my school and ended up working at my school. My grandma tutored. The love of learning has always been there. When I applied to college, I knew I was going to Ball State, and I knew I was going to be a teacher. I never questioned it.

Q. What are some of your approaches to teaching that have made the biggest impact in your classroom?

I look at the children that I serve in my classroom as human beings. When I was in school, we were students. I had wonderful teachers, but it was a sign of the times. Teachers and students didn't share anything personal about themselves. You functioned as adult and child. I knew that in my classroom, I wanted to be relationship oriented. We share stories and I know what's going on in their lives. I've found that those organic stories makes it easy to foster a good relationship. When students see both your strengths and your flaws, they're more likely to open up—especially during one-on-one conversations when a child is dealing with something difficult. Relationships are the foundation of everything here. I think I've also been successful in my classroom because I like to bring in all the experts. There is so much that my students need to be prepared for when they leave. It doesn't matter how old they are, I'm trying to expose them to as much as I can and I love that they're young. Last year, we had virtual pen pals on the border of Texas and Mexico. They were so incredibly willing to have conversations about our likenesses and differences. I've had an architect come into our classroom, along with town council

members, doctors, nurses, dentists and an Indy 500 princess. It's their safe learning environment and all of these fields bring the outside world in and broaden their understanding to a much bigger and brighter world.

Q. What do you want people to know about the work that Indiana educators are doing every day?

We have great teachers and I wish every teacher in our state could see that. So often we are limited to going to professional developments and when we do, we stick with our people, and we don't get the opportunity to sit down and have professional conversations with other teachers. That door has been opened for me and I wish every teacher had the opportunity to witness the issues I'm seeing, the solutions I'm working toward - so that they can have the realization that so many others are in the same situation. When you have those conversations, you realize that great things are happening and there is an opportunity to collaborate.

Q. What advice would you give Aspiring Educators?

One of the things that I wish I would have known when I was coming out of college is that you get to build the classroom that you want to teach in and your students want to learn in. I was given the keys to a door, but I get to decide what fills that space—effective practices, a strong child guidance plan, and collaborations with other professions that make sense. As a new teacher, I tried to discipline like one teacher and tried to please parents and administrators, but I had a classroom that wasn't authentic. It was good for my students but once I realized that I was in control of everything from the professional view down, it changed everything for me. You can build your classroom brick by brick with what serves your students best. That has been the key to my happiness. I shut my door and I teach. I don't care what anybody is doing outside...I am here to serve my students and I get to make it look however I want.



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FROM THE CLASSROOM TO THE FIELD:

Growing Union Leaders Through Experience

UNISERV INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The goal of **ISTA's Intern Program** is to **prepare active members**, who have already developed foundational skills in areas such as **member representation, bargaining, organizing and union activism** for future field work with ISTA.

The program runs from **January through December** and typically includes **two to four members in each cohort**. Upon completing the first year, participants are **evaluated for inclusion in ISTA's hiring pool**. Those selected will continue into a second year of the program, gaining **additional training and hands-on experience**.

Since its inception, the **intern program has taken many forms**. Today, **19 current ISTA staff members are proud alumni** of the program—demonstrating its lasting impact on developing strong leaders within the association.



Here is one of our most recent alums who have become a full-time staff member at ISTA.

“

During my internship, I shadowed staff in nearly every ISTA area, giving me the opportunity to see a lot of different approaches to staff work. Learning directly from the professionals who work for a labor union was an invaluable experience. Looking back, I can see that ISTA staff have always been there supporting and training me. I participated in the Emerging Leaders program twice, led an Early Leadership Institute program in my local and other area local unions, and participated in ongoing coaching and leadership development from my UD and UOs. More than anything, the intern program taught me over and over the lesson that is at the core of all union organizing: the importance of relying on one another. We cannot do this work alone, and we are stronger together.

”

DAKOTA HUDELSON-ZIPPER

Intern: January 2025
Hired: September 2025



EMERGING LEADERS PROGRAM

The Emerging Leaders cohort program is **designed to identify, strengthen and broaden the leadership skills** that are rooted in our ISTA members. Throughout this program, participants will **identify individual strengths, build communication skills and develop habits** that will allow them to take risks without fear of failure. Participants are also invited to **fun and engaging cohort building activities** before each training session.

We accept about 40 members in each cohort. The application opens in October and the first session is in late January.



“*The Emerging Leaders Cohort has been empowering and transformative. It helped me realize my potential as a leader and trust in my abilities.*

As educators, we often see our leadership as simply service or teaching, but the ELC helped me understand that those qualities are exactly what make us leaders among our peers. After Emerging Leaders, I recognized that serving my association and colleagues is leadership—and that it's more than a title.

That realization has made me more confident in my classroom, my building and my community. The experience was unforgettable, and I'm deeply grateful for the colleagues and staff who make the ELC such an invaluable resource within ISTA.

**MARC PRICE,
RICHMOND
EDUCATION
ASSOCIATION**

**2024-25 Cohort
Participant**



LEARN MORE

View the emerging leaders testimonial video.



Scholarships & Awards

Each year, ISTA and the ISTA Foundation award scholarships to public high school seniors and honor educators and community members who support and strengthen public education. **Scholarship and award applications opened Jan. 1, and most are due March 1.**

HERE ARE SOME OF THE OPPORTUNITIES NOW OPEN:



ISTA Aspiring Educators Scholarship

Awards scholarship funds to four ISTA Aspiring Educators members.



Outstanding Local Advisor Award

Recognizes an ISTA Aspiring Educators advisor at a university or college Aspiring Educators chapter.



Damon P. Moore Scholarship

For a minority public high school senior pursuing a teaching certificate.



Justine M. Harrell Memorial Scholarship

For a public high school senior pursuing an education degree.



The ISTA Hoosier Educator of the Year Award

Honors an ISTA member who demonstrates excellence in teaching and inspires both students and colleagues.



Education Support Professional (ESP) of the Year

Recognizes an ESP member who makes a significant impact on student success and school operations.



REVIEW CRITERIA

To review eligibility criteria, submission guidelines and deadlines, visit the webpage.

DRIVE FORWARD PUBLIC EDUCATION



The new **ISTA Foundation specialty license plate** is now available for purchase. When you choose this plate, **you're helping champion public education across Indiana.**

A portion of every plate sale contributes to scholarships and grants benefiting current and aspiring Indiana educators. Show your pride in public education every mile you drive.

ISTA Foundation license plates may be purchased at a BMV branch, online via myBMV.com or at a BMV Connect kiosk. When you purchase a plate, you'll pay registration fees and taxes.



SECURE YOUR PLATE

Visit the webpage for more information.

Representative Assembly Delegate Elections

NEA RA Election: Active Members

ISTA active members may elect 31 Category 1 state delegate positions and one Category 2 state delegate position (final delegate numbers to be determined by the National Education Association (NEA) membership records on January 15, 2026) to the 2026 and 2027 meetings of the NEA RA to be held in Denver, Colorado and Indianapolis, Indiana, respectively.

Active candidates for Category 1 include NEA active members who are not supervisors and NEA life members who are not supervisors, retired or staff. Category 2 members include NEA active members who are supervisors, NEA retired life members, NEA staff life members and NEA active members for life who are past presidents of the Association and who do not meet the requirements for membership set forth in bylaw 2-1b. No Category 2 nominations were received.

2026 & 2027 NEA RA State Delegate Active Candidate List | Category 1

Julie Anoskey

- NEA State Delegate
- ISTA RA Delegate
- Evansville TA Vice President I

Dana Barrett

- ETA member since 2018
- ISTA RA attendee for 2 years
- Local secretary/treasurer for 2 years

John-Raul Buisson

- Racial Affairs Committee Member (District 2)
- ISTA Member Organizer
- Association Representative - John Young Middle School

Benjamin Church

- PCTA Vice President of Membership
- Member of Issues and Concerns Committee
- District 6 MARCO Subcommittee

Jeremiah Cook

- ISTA and NEA RA Delegate
- Pike CTA Association Representative
- Marion County Public Education Coalition

Katie Cook

- Previous NEA RA and ISTA RA Delegate
- District Council (12-2) and Governance Representative
- Current Local Treasurer and Building AR

Beverly Doughty

- Board of Directors ISTA
- Co-President MGTA
- Chair of Affiliations ISTA

Jessica Farlow

- FWEA Vice President
- ISTA Board of Directors (District 4)
- Audit, BMP and DISCO Activity

Sia Faulk

- FWEA 2nd VP Community Involvement
- FWEA - NEA RA Assembly Philadelphia
- District Council Member

Andrew Fultz

- FWEA 3rd VP for Membership
- NEA RA Philadelphia Delegate
- NEA RA Houston Delegate

Nicole Gernand

- Building Association Representative 12 years
- Local Board of Directors Member
- Elkhart Year Round Organizer

Michelle Harden

- Emerging Leaders
- ELI Participant and Coach
- Local Rep. and Board Member

Rosiland Jackson

- ISTA Board Member
- Indianapolis Education Association (1st VP)
- NEA RA Delegate 2025

Sean Johnston

- ISTA - Issues and Concerns Committee Member
- NEA-SB - Executive Board Member
- NEA-SB - Bargaining Team Member

LaTrice Jones

- Vice President of Local Merrillville Association
- RAC Member
- Bargaining/Negotiation Committee

Lisa Koester

- Past Local President
- NEA State and Local Delegate
- ISTA RA Delegate

Stacy Kurdalak

- ISTA Vice President
- RCCTA Vice President of Membership
- RCCTA Past President

Jennifer Laughlin

- ISTA Board of Directors
- Past ISTA Treasurer
- Board Representative on Governance Committee

Shaina Liv Lescano

- Elected to NEA Resolutions Committee 2025
- Former ISTA Board of Directors
- Held various leadership positions in local

Christopher Ludy

- NEA RA Local Delegate
- ISTA RA Delegate
- Pike CTA President for 5 Years

Eric Marty

- Local President
- Established local working conditions committee
- Attended ISTA & NEA RAs in 2025

Shane Matlock

- Attending ISTA RA for 18 Years
- Attending Statehouse Days
- Attending ISTA and National Conferences

Conner McNeely

- ISTA Board of Directors
- Association Representative
- Local Membership Chair

Teresa Meredith

- ISTA President (2013-2019)
- Local SCTA President (2024-Present)
- ISTA Governance Committee (2019-2025)

Ruby Nemeth

- Leaders for Just Schools (Denver Cohort)
- 2025 NEA Global Learning Fellow
- ISTA Emerging Leader Graduate (2025)

Carey Obye

- LEA Vice President - 2019-Current
- Campaign Lab Team Lead
- MarCo (districts 6-1 & 6-2) Committee Co-Chair

Diana Reed

- ISTA Treasurer (2023-Present)
- ISTA Board (2014-Present)
- NEA RA Delegate (2004-Present)

Andie Renner-Miller

- ISTA ESP District Council Chairperson
- ESP I-PACE Board Member
- Professional Practices and Standards Committee

Carrie Shank

- Repeat Local Delegate for NEA RA
- Local AR for 4 years
- Presenter at Summer Conference

Monica Shellhamer

- ISTA Governance Chair
- Local Vice President
- Attended 6 NEA RAs

Kerry Showers

- Member of the Racial Affairs Committee
- Member of the Human Civil Rights Committee
- I am an Association Representative

Kristina Shultz

- Current President, MCTA (2019-Present)
- I-PACE Member
- ISTA Board of Directors (District 1-1)

Heidi Slavkin

- Pike CTA Association Rep - 4 years
- ISTA PPS Committee - 10 years
- DISCO Member - 12 years

Sherelle Smith

- IEA Executive Board Member
- MLK Luncheon Co-Chair
- IEA Building Representative

Yolanda Smith

- NEA Campaign Lab Coach/Team Lead
- NEA NOFA Fellow
- ISTA Educators of Color Conference Co-Chair

Jennifer Smith-Margraf

- ISTA President
- ISTA Executive Committee
- ISTA Board of Directors

Sophia-Grace Stewart

- Racial Affairs Committee Co-Chair for ISTA
- AR for Positive Supports Academy
- Educators of Color Conference Co-Chair

Randy Studt

- I-PACE Chair
- District 8 Board Member
- WLEA Member-Activist

Ronald Swann

- I attend ISTA and NEA RAs
- President of IEA
- Co-chair of the ISTA Racial Affairs Committee

Laura VanderHaeghen

- Central Discussion Chair
- Social Media Chair
- Bargaining Team Member

Charles Ward

- Local President
- ESP District Council
- ESP Board of Directors Representative

Philip Ward

- ISTA Board of Directors
- VP of Membership for Local
- Lobby Days at Statehouse

Tiauna Washington

- Former NEA Resolutions Member - 7 years
- ISTA Board of Directors (Area 7-2)
- REA Social Media Director and Building AR

The candidate names and self-identified Association activities are listed in alphabetical order here. On the ballot, candidate names appear in random, drawn order.

THIS PAGE IS NOT A BALLOT. Each active, life Association member and retired life Association member eligible to vote will find the appropriate ballot inserted in the Advocate. Rules for voting accompany the official ballot. If you are an eligible voter and did not receive a ballot insert, contact the ISTA Member Resource Center at **844-ASK-ISTA** or **askista@ista-in.org**.

To comply with the Landrum-Griffin Action, NEA will not list or elect minority candidates separately. Minority candidates have the option of indicating minority membership in their personal information.

NEA RA Election: Retired Members

ISTA retired members may elect six delegate positions (final delegate numbers to be determined by the National Education Association (NEA) membership records on January 15, 2026) to the 2026 and 2027 meetings of the NEA RA and NEA-Retired Annual Meeting to be held in Denver, Colorado and Indianapolis, Indiana, respectively.

Donna Bernens-Kinkead

- Participate in Limestone Retired (Monroe Cty.)
- Former AR for MCEA (Monroe County)
- Member for 30 years (Monroe County)

Sarah E. Borgman

- NEA and ISTA Retired Past President
- Past Board Member NEA and ISTA
- NEA/ISTA RA Delegate 50+ years

Terry R. Brendel

- 25+ year delegate NEA-RA
- ISTA-Chair Board Management Personnel Committee
- President Dunes Shore Retired

Deborah K. Brogan

- Treasurer of REECI
- RA Delegate Retired
- Conference @ ISTA-Retired

Ginger Lee Calhoun

- ISTA Board - Retired Member
- ISTA-Retired Board - Vice Chair
- 1-F Retired President

Donna L. Craig

- Vice President Fort Wayne Retired
- Representative on District Council and Treasurer

Rodney W. Ellcessor

- Retired Chairperson
- ISTA RA Delegate
- NEA RA Delegate

Janet Hayes

- Chalkboard Editor / Membership Committee Member
- Zone 2 Coordinator / Scholarship Committee Member
- 1-F Retired Chapter Secretary/Treasurer

P. Jane Huber

- President of Blue River ISTA-Retired
- Attended ISTA RA for 41 years
- Attended NEA RA for several years

Hilda M. Kendrick

- ISTA-Retired NEA PAC Chair
- ISTA-Retired Legislative Committee
- ISTA-Retired Scholarship Committee

Cheryl I. Lone

- Previous Dist Council
- State MAC

Matthew S. McCarthy

- 38 year member in ISTA
- Over 30 years bargaining team member
- Over 20 years local RA delegate

John McLaughlin

- ISTA Board of Directors
- Chair, L-PAC
- President, Falls of Ohio Retired

Barbara June Rotramel

- Member of local assn, state, & national
- Attending all local meetings

Michael J. Rust

- Delegate NEA RA (6 times)
- President Evansville Teachers Association (3 Terms)
- Presenter NEA Leadership Summit West/East

Roger Sharp

- ISTA-Retired Executive Committee
- ISTA-Retired Legislative Committee Chair
- NEA Representative Assembly retired delegate

Risa A. Stockton

- Vice President
Hamilton County
Retired
- ISTA-Retired State
Council
- Zone 5 member

Theresa A. Tafflinger

- ISTA-Retired State
District Council
Secretary
- ISTA-Retired State
Scholarship Committee
Chair
- 1-B Retired Local
Chapter President

Terry E. Troxell

- ISTA Member on staff
(since 1966)
- Zone 4 ISTA-R
Coordinator

Susan D. Wygant

- Co-president Allen
Chapter (since 2024)
- Life-long member &
former treasurer
- Frequent ISTA RA &
NEA RA FWEA
representative

Carolyn M. Yates

- ISTA-Retired – Former
Board of Directors
Committee
- FWEA Retired – Co
Vice President ('24 +
'25)
- FWEA/ISTA RA, ISTA-
Retired Conference ('24
+ '25)

Kathy A. Zoucha

- NEA-RA Delegate
- ISTA-RA Delegate
- Allen County Chapter
Representative Retired

The candidate names and self-identified Association activities are listed in alphabetical order here. On the ballot, candidate names appear in random, drawn order.

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ISTA

Representative Assembly

Retired Delegate Candidates

ISTA retired members may elect 32 delegate positions (additional delegates shall be granted if at least 10 days prior to the meeting of the RA the ISTA-Retired chairperson certifies to the Association president that ISTA-Retired has sufficient members to qualify for additional delegates) to the 2026 and 2027 meetings of the ISTA RA to be held April 18 and April 24, respectively.

2026 & 2027 ISTA RA Retired Candidate List

Donna Bernens-Kinhead

- Participate in Limestone Retired (Monroe Cty.)
- Former AR for MCEA (Monroe County)
- Member for 30 years (Monroe County)

Sarah E. Borgman

- NEA and ISTA Retired Past President
- Past Board Member NEA and ISTA
- NEA/ISTA RA Delegate 50+ years

Peggy D. Boyd

- Vice Pres of Chapter
- Communications Committee
- Archives Committee

Terry R. Brendel

- 25+ year delegate NEA-RA
- ISTA-Chair Board Management Personnel Committee
- President Dunes Shore Retired

Judith A. Briganti

- Past President ISTA
- Elkhart County Retired Secretary/Treasurer
- ISTA RA Delegate

Deborah K. Brogan

- Treasurer of REECI
- RA Delegate Retired
- Conference @ ISTA-Retired

Ginger Lee Calhoun

- ISTA Board - Retired Member
- ISTA-Retired Board - Vice Chair
- 1-F Retired President

Teresa L. Collier

- ISTA-Retired Newsletter Committee (current)
- ISTA Board of Directors 7 yrs.
- ISTA Affiliation Committee 6 yrs.

John D. Comer

- ISTA-R
- ISTA-R Communication Subcommittee
- ISTA Governance Committee

Donna L. Craig

- Vice President Fort Wayne Retired
- Representative on District Council and Treasurer

Rodney W. Ellcessor

- Retired Chairperson
- ISTA RA Delegate
- NEA RA Delegate

Keith Gambill

- ISTA President (2019-2025)
- ISTA Vice President (2014-2019)
- Evansville Teachers Association President

Janet L. Hayes

- Chalkboard Editor / Membership Committee Member
- Zone 2 Coordinator / Scholarship Committee Member
- 1-F Retired Chapter Secretary/Treasurer

P. Jane Huber

- President of Blue River ISTA-Retired
- Attended ISTA RA for 41 years
- Attended NEA RA for several years

Dennis D. Keithley

- President Lake County Chapter ISTA, Inc.
- ISTA-Retired Board Member
- Scholarship Committee ISTA-Retired

Hilda M. Kendrick

- ISTA-Retired NEA PAC Chair
- ISTA-Retired Legislative Committee
- ISTA-Retired Scholarship Committee

Deb L. Marcum

- At-Large Executive Committee member
- Communications Committee chair
- Local President of Hamilton County

John McLaughlin

- ISTA Board of Directors
- Chair, L-PAC
- President, Falls of Ohio Retired

MaryAnn Elizabeth Pollard

- President of REECI Chapter
- Liaison on District Council
- Retired District Council - Golden Touch Committee

Barbara June Rotramel

- Member of local assn, state, & national
- Attending all local meetings

Michael J. Rust

- Delegate NEA RA (6 times)
- President Evansville Teachers Association (3 Terms)
- Presenter NEA Leadership Summit West/East

Roger Sharp

- ISTA-Retired Executive Committee
- ISTA-Retired Legislative Committee Chair
- NEA Representative Assembly retired delegate

Joanne J. Solomon

- Retired President of Greater Indy ISTA
- ISTA Representative Assembly
- Life Member

Risa A. Stockton

- Vice President Hamilton County Retired
- ISTA-Retired State Council
- Zone 5 member

Theresa A. Tafflinger

- ISTA-Retired State District Council Secretary
- ISTA-Retired State Scholarship Committee Chair
- 1-B Retired Local Chapter President

Terry E. Troxell

- ISTA Member on staff (since 1966)
- Zone 4 ISTA-R Coordinator

Suzanne Tyler

- NE IN ISTA-R Pres.
- ISTA Board Member (2012-2019)
- Local Active Pres.

Karen S. Warble

- ISTA Board of Directors-Retired Representative
- ISTA-Retired Executive Committee, Zone 6 Coordinator
- Retired Communications Committee Secretary

Donnie Watkins

- ISTA-R Legislative Committee
- ISTA-R Issues & Concerns Liaison
- Former ISTA Board Member

Brenda Weddell

- State ISTA Elections Chair for 12 years
- Local President (40 yrs)
- Jackson-Scott-Washington - Retired President

Steve A. Wilson

- Member - ISTA-Retired Legislative Committee
- Member - CHMT ISTA-Retired Chapter

Elden (Al) J. Wolting

- ISTA-Retired Communications Chair
- ISTA-Retired Member At Large Ex Com
- NEA Delegate (12 years)

Susan D. Wygant

- Co-president Allen Chapter (since 2024)
- Life-long member & former treasurer
- Frequent ISTA RA & NEA RA FWEA representative

Carolyn M. Yates

- ISTA-Retired - Former Board of Directors-Committee
- FWEA Retired - Co Vice President ('24+'25)
- FWEA/ISTA RA, ISTA-Retired Conference ('24+'25)

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ISTA TREASURER

Candidate Statement



DIANA REED

It has been an honor and privilege to serve as treasurer of the Indiana State Teachers Association, and I am seeking reelection to continue ensuring our finances remain transparent, accurate and strong. As I begin my 38th year in education, I often reflect on the leadership opportunities ISTA has provided me throughout my career. This organization has stood beside me every step of the way, just as it continues to provide strength, guidance and support to nearly 40,000 members.

I believe good governance and fiscal responsibility are the foundation of ISTA's ability to fight for fair wages, strong benefits and improved working conditions. While the challenges facing public education remain significant, my goal is to build on the progress we've made and keep ISTA financially strong so that our advocacy for public schools and educators continues for generations.

If reelected, I will remain committed to accountability, accessibility and responsible stewardship of our resources. Our strength rests both in our collective voice and in the trust our members place in how dues are managed. I will uphold that trust and ensure that dollars directly support our advocacy, professional growth and public education. I respectfully ask for your vote.

CANDIDATE FOR ISTA TREASURER

FIVE EDUCATOR MUST HAVES

Teaching demands more than lesson plans and standards—it calls for heart, humor and resilience. Here are a few qualities that help educators thrive through every challenge and every joy that comes their way.



EMPATHY

Sensing when a student needs grace and offering it without hesitation is essential.



**HANNAH
CATES**

Hannah Cates is a member of the Kankakee Valley TA. She is an English teacher at Kankakee Valley High School.



A SENSE OF HUMOR

Sometimes laughter is the best medicine whether handling bad news or a bad attitude.



CONFIDENCE

Reflect on your practice and trust in your abilities. Remember to be confident in your abilities. (Oh, and they know classroom management falls apart when personal doubt creeps in.)

ADAPTABILITY

Even the most carefully crafted plan can be interrupted at any moment by a fire drill, an upset child, a phone call, a parent meeting, spilled paint, a jammed copier, a “see me” email, a sub shortage or an intestinal attack.



SUPPORT

A strong support system makes room to vent, celebrate, plan, create, learn, grow, connect, recharge, heal and breathe.





Indiana
State
Teachers
Association

150 W. Market St., Ste. 900
Indianapolis, IN 46204



/istamembers



@ISTAmembers



/indianastateteachers

nea Retirement Program

NAVIGATING YOUR INVESTMENT JOURNEY

Which Path Are You On?

Saving and Planning Workshops for ISTA Members

As part of your membership, NEA Member Benefits and Security Benefit are offering free, local workshops to help members build a successful path to retirement. Regardless of where you're at on your retirement journey, our workshops can help you find answers to your fundamental questions.

Don't miss this opportunity to get on the right path and take control of your retirement journey.

For more information contact Nick Dobelbower

Indiana Regional Vice President, Security Benefit | Nick.Dobelbower@SecurityBenefit.com | 785.438.3078

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TO AND THROUGH RETIREMENT



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