Photos from ISTA’s Summer Conferences.
View some of the best moments from our conferences.
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:

Frank Vargo
Indiana State Director, Security Benefit
Frank.Vargo@SecurityBenefit.com
574.303.7248

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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.
or many of us, the end of summer break is upon us, and we are preparing for a new school year to begin. I hope that you took some time for yourself over the summer and enjoyed time with your friends and family - especially since I saw so many of you at conferences and meetings honing your professional and leadership skills, networking and helping set the agenda for our union.

I’ve run into so many association leaders over the summer attending ISTA’s Summer Leadership Conference and our first Indiana Educators of Color Networking Conference, the NEA Representative Assembly (RA), the Indiana Black Expo Educators conference and other events and trainings around the state and country. I want to say “thank you” to all of you for attending these conferences and remaining dedicated to your professional growth and development. I know that a lot of the resources and information learned, as well as the connections you made, will be helpful as you plan for the upcoming school year.

Over the next year, there is more work to do as we continue advocating for public schools, educators and students rights. We advocate for these issues using our collective power and influence, which we strengthen through membership and reaching out into our communities. We must utilize the start of this school year to recruit and ensure that educators are active members of the union.

Together, we have a stronger voice in the issues that matter at the bargaining table and at the state Capitol. And, together, we are more effective standing up for Indiana public schools and supporting all Hoosier kids - no matter their color, background or ZIP code. Collectively, we can ensure that generations to come experience a fair education system.

This new year will be full of wonderful possibilities and a time for us to advocate and enact real change. As the days become shorter and signal the end of summer and the return to school, I hope that you are able to relax the last few days before waking up early, planning lessons, collaborating with colleagues and nurturing students become part of the daily routine again.

All my best,

Keith Gambill
ISTA President
Teleia Magee

Teleia Magee is an English teacher at Westlane Middle School and a member of Washington Township Education Association. In addition, she serves as a member of the ISTA Racial Affairs Committee.

After 180 days of curriculum, activities, testing and other responsibilities that make up a school year, how do you de-stress and take care of yourself? Here are some things that I plan throughout the year to take care of my self and keep stress in check:

- **Taking a vacation**
  Whether it is Puerto Rico, Texas, Louisiana or Cincinnati, I love traveling to places that include hot weather, a beach and scrumptious food.

- **Spending time with my family**
  I live two hours away from my immediate family, so the summer is our time to spend quality time by catching up, going swimming and playing games. We are a competitive family, so there will be an intense Connect Four or basketball tournament occurring.

- **Trying a new activity or restaurant**
  Social media has provided me with some great activities to try from sneaker design bars, art museums, restaurants and day trips.

- **Attending a concert, festival or sporting event**
  I love a wide range of music, so I always try to attend multiple concerts. I’m also a huge sports fan and I thoroughly enjoy the atmosphere at the Indiana Fever home games.
Know Your Rights

At the top of a new school year, it’s imperative that you know your rights, especially if you’re a new educator. Below you will find a list of your rights as an educator.

Union & Educator Voice

When we unite as union members, we can be extremely impactful. Joining the union ensures that you have a voice. As educators and education support professionals, we are a community of teachers, nurses, paraeducators, counselors, custodians, bus drivers, parents and community members working together to achieve the very best for students and public schools.

When joining together, we have more power to advocate for:

- Better pay and benefits
- Better working conditions
- Better learning conditions for our students

Inclusive Workplaces

When our educators feel safe, welcome and included, they can spend more time focusing on educating our students. In your workplace, there should be racial equity, sexual orientation equity, gender equity and equity for people with differing abilities. Discrimination in the workplace should never happen, however we have a system put into place to protect you.

Student Debt Support

Education should be affordable and accessible to all. The National Education Association is working to cancel student debt and improve forgiveness programs to ensure that everybody has the same access to learning and growing.

Fair Pay & Benefits

Providing fair pay and benefits to our educators ensures that quality educators can join and stay in our profession. Without professional pay, health care benefits, retirement security and job security, it becomes difficult for educators to know and understand that they are valued.

Scan Here For

More info on your rights as an educator and how you can protect yourself.
Make the most of your new MEMBERSHIP!

Find out how NEA Member Benefits can help you:

→ Reduce student debt
→ Save on travel and everyday items
→ Get insurance that fits your schedule
→ Sign up for free life insurance
→ Plan ahead for retirement

And so much more!

Scan below to learn more
The 2023 legislative session concluded in May and several important education laws have taken effect as of July 1.

Here are the top three:

**HEA 1447: Banning Books, Third Party Surveys and Neutrality for Student Activities**

This law requires schools to adopt policies and procedures concerning materials alleged to be obscene or harmful to minors. It also removes schools from the list of entities eligible for a specified defense to such criminal prosecutions. Educators successfully prosecuted could face up to 10 years in jail and a $10,000 fine.

The law is a thinly veiled attempt to censor books and other materials that are considered “controversial” or “inappropriate” by the far right. In some communities, this will have a chilling effect on free speech and academic freedom, as educators will be less likely to offer materials that could be challenged.

The law also regulates third-party surveys used by schools. It outlines exceptions for academic tests, third-party surveys and career assessments with appropriate consent.

Lastly, the law prohibits public schools from incentivizing students to engage in political activism or lobbying without offering an alternative option. The intention behind this law seems to undermine trust in public school teachers and their judgment without concrete evidence.

**HEA 1608: Human Sexuality Instruction**

This law prohibits schools and educators from providing human sexuality instruction to students in pre-K through third grade. However, employees can respond to student questions on the subject. It’s important to note that public schools don’t currently provide sex education to students in pre-K through third grade. This highlights a trend from this current legislative
session in that many new laws are a solution in search of a problem.

By far the most controversial new requirement is for schools to notify parents when students request changes to their name, pronouns or other identifying factors. The law does not apply to accredited nonpublic schools or those accepting vouchers. Rather than allowing local schools and educators to work collaboratively with parents on addressing individual student needs, the law adds a blanket statewide mandate for educators on addressing issues of pronouns and name changes.

HEA 1608 is one of several bills that have been introduced in state legislatures across the country in recent years that restrict LGBTQ+ education in schools.

**SEA 486: Stripping Teachers’ Discussion Rights**

This law encompasses several unrelated provisions under the false intention of deregulation. It repeals training requirements on criminal gang organizations, homeless students and seizure symptoms, incorporating them into teacher preparation programs.

This law’s biggest impact is with the elimination of a 50-year right for teachers to discuss a variety of important student learning conditions with school administrators. By eliminating this requirement, the bill gives school districts the power to make decisions about curriculum, class size and safety without input from the teachers who are on the front lines of educating students. ISTA is working hard to restore this practice locally through adoption of school policies or school board resolutions.

**Scan Here For**

A summary of all new education laws passed in the 2023 session can be found on ISTA’s website under the Our Advocacy tab at ista-in.org/advocacy
As one of the few educators of color within my school corporation, I saw a need to address equity and inclusion issues in my school district. After one-on-one and small group conversations with educators, as well as meetings with local association leaders and ISTA staff, I decided to establish a coalition in 2020 to work in solidarity around equity issues within Richmond Community Schools.

We began by holding listening sessions with educators and paraprofessionals of color to learn about the issues of importance to them. To establish a clear direction for our coalition, we established five goals:

1. Conduct a racial climate assessment of students, educators and community members.
2. Build a more diverse teacher/administrator workforce focusing on recruitment, retention and engagement of educators of color.
3. Support student cultural inclusion/affinity leadership goals.
4. Develop anti-racism curriculum.
5. Create a diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) policy with measurable actions.

Locally-led Coalition
GETTING RESULTS
for District and Community

To date, the coalition has grown with over 40 diverse educators, students, parents and community members who meet monthly to work on goals and actionable priorities for our district.
To date, some coalition wins have included:

**Professional Development**

Several trainings have been held for district staff that focus on DEI, implicit bias, microaggressions and stereotypes. The professional development trainings include educators and community members.

**Climate Assessments**

Racial climate assessments were conducted for students, educators and community members.

**School Board and Staff Engagement**

Coalition members have conducted one-on-one meetings with board members with the goal to support the school board’s objective of promoting DEI, with a focus on development of equity policy. Coalition members have also conducted building blitzes to have one-on-one conversations with educators to hear their voices and concerns.

**Program Growth**

Two learning sessions have been held for paraprofessionals interested in becoming certified educators in the classroom.

**Community Partnerships**

Inspired by conversations with coalition members, staff at Indiana University East have conducted several meetings for paraprofessionals to develop pathways to becoming a licensed teacher.

If you’re interested in doing similar work in your local, please contact Director of Government, Community, Racial and Social Justice Jerell Blakely.
Suzanne Glass-Foster is a Physical Sciences educator and member of Evansville Teachers Association. Glass-Foster is originally from Gary, Indiana. However, she was born and raised in East Chicago, Indiana. Glass-Foster has been an educator for 23 years. Currently, she is in the ISTA UniServ Internship program and in May 2023, she was awarded the ISTA Minority Educator of the Year award.

**Q. What inspired you to become an educator?**

**A.** I did not plan to pursue a career in the field of education, so I believe that I was led by God to become an educator. I was working in a chemical lab in northern Indiana, and I was determining what I wanted to do next in life and I started substitute teaching. I loved being a sub, so I decided to pursue teaching full-time.

**Q. What do you enjoy about teaching?**

**A.** I enjoy building relationships with my students. My goal is to make them people of character and integrity. I want them to be good people and make a difference in the world. I enjoy seeing my student’s light bulb go off once they begin to understand an assignment. I enjoy making students ready for the future. I believe that the more education you have, the more choices you have in life, and that’s what I try to instill into my students.
Q. How would you describe yourself as a student?

A. I was self-driven and motivated. I had a lot of friends in honors classes, and I wanted to be like them, so I worked hard, because I knew that I wasn’t where a lot of my friends were academically. I believe that my motivation stemmed from my parents. My dad didn’t have a college degree, but he would often sit and read computer books because he was a computer analyst. My mom always promoted education. They never put any pressure on me, but it was ingrained in me that if I wanted to excel, I had to work hard. Growing up, I had a lot of great teachers, and they expected a lot out of us. In high school, I participated in a lot of schools clubs and activities like band, choir, and service club.

Q. How has ISTA contributed to your professional growth?

A. Because of where I grew up, I thought that being a part of a union is something that you’re supposed to do. Through the years, as education has changed and become more constricted, I had a desire to be aware of the policies occurring within education. In 2017, I became more active within ISTA by attending trainings and workshops, but I really became more engaged when an ISTA UniServ Director requested that I participate in a campaign. I did not want to do it at first, but it was the best thing that I’ve ever done, and I had an opportunity to meet some amazing people. Through ISTA, I’ve developed a sense of leadership and I have become less of an introvert. During the last couple of years, I feel as if I’ve been able to have a voice through the union. Because of the union, despite the challenges surrounding education, I still have a sense of security.

Q. What was your reaction to winning the Minority of the Year award?

A. It was truly an honor for ISTA and the Racial Affairs Committee to think that much of me to present me with this award. It means a lot to me. I really want to do more for the union and encourage others to become more involved in the union.

Q. What’s one piece of advice you would give someone interested in teaching?

A. I have three things 1) be ready for change because the field of education won’t stay the same, 2) don’t pursue the field of education if you do not like kids and 3) be open to continuous learning.

Q. What’s one thing you want your students to take away from you as an educator?

A. I want my students to be open to continuing to learn. The biggest thing for me is for my students to be a person of integrity. I want them to do the right thing even when no one is looking.
Benefits of Joining

ISTA-RETIRED

I retired one year ago, but I’ve been an ISTA pre-retired member since 2006. Although, I was an active teacher at the time, several people encouraged me to join. After joining, I realized that there are a significant number of benefits to joining ISTA-Retired.

Here are three reasons to join:

1. **Continuous Membership:**
   After retirement, those of us who have spent a lifetime in education will continue to pay attention to educational issues and will want to stay connected to ISTA. By being a retired member, we have an opportunity to stay involved in the Association. ISTA-Retired has chapter organizations across the state where members may be involved. Each of these chapters have meetings throughout the year. Some of the meetings are social gatherings at various locations, whereas other meetings are more informational on various retirement issues.

2. **Access to Workshops:**
   The ISTA-Retired membership committee holds several workshops across the state for retirement issues concerning Medicare, Indiana Teacher Retirement Fund and legal issues. It is always helpful to have those who have been through retirement issues to help active teachers chart their course to retirement, and it is even better when ISTA-Retired provides the resources to help.

3. **Member Benefits:**
   Finally, as an ISTA-Retired member, you retain all the benefits enjoyed as an active member including saving and discounts in the areas of travel, auto, financial and insurance. NEA also has savings in Medicare supplemental insurance, dental and vision insurance, long term care insurance and pet health insurance.

I continue to stay involved in ISTA-Retired because of the political environment that continues to challenge our schools and Teachers’ Retirement Fund Cost of Living Adjustments. I want my community to continue to thrive and that cannot happen without strong schools. Once we retire, we need to have a retirement income that isn’t totally diminished due to inflation.

I encourage active teachers to join ISTA-Retired and take advantage of all it has to offer.

To sign up for pre-Retired subscription, please visit the ISTA Retired webpage at ista-in.org/retired.
When you join ISTA, you’re joining an Association that will support you throughout your career and you’ll be in the company of nearly 40,000 educators who are all in for kids and public education. Your membership gives you a voice locally and statewide. If you know a colleague who isn’t a member of ISTA, share with them the value of belonging. Encourage them to take advantage of Early Enrollment.

1. **No Fees Until Next School Year**

   Until Sept. 1, a potential ISTA member can join the Association without paying dues until the new school year begins.

2. **Professional Development Opportunities**

   Members can gain professional development opportunities provided by the local, ISTA and NEA. Professional development opportunities include trainings, conferences, workshops and online resources.

3. **Collective Voice**

   The Association provides a collective voice and a seat at the table when bargaining for better working conditions for educators and learning conditions for students, competitive and attractive pay and benefits, professional autonomy and more.
This summer, we had the pleasure of hosting two conferences: Summer Leadership Conference and Indiana Educators of Color Networking Conference. At both conferences, we had the opportunity to honor ISTA award recipients and leaders who have come before us, mingle with fellow educators, hear from amazing keynote speakers and learn invaluable information in various breakout sessions.

Thank you to all those who attended! Here are some of our favorite moments.
School’s out!
You deserve a summer of self-care.

After surviving a long school year, reward yourself by doing something that’s good for you and your financial well-being — such as making sure your insurance and retirement plans are still on track.

Long-time corporate supporter, Horace Mann, helps provide solutions to address the challenges you face every day, in and out of the classroom. Horace Mann offers educators affordable auto, home and life insurance, as well as retirement solutions. Horace Mann also offers programs to help you find more money in your budget and ongoing support to help grow and protect your assets with confidence.

Click or scan the QR code to locate a local Horace Mann representative to learn more.
Scan the QR code
To review full photo albums from ISTA’s 2023 summer conferences.
MEET ISTA’S NEWLY-ELECTED OFFICERS

At the 2023 ISTA Representative Assembly (RA), delegates elected Jennifer Smith-Margraf as ISTA Vice President and Diana Reed as ISTA Treasurer. Get to know ISTA’s newest officers.

Q. Where do you teach?
A. Tecumseh Junior High School in Lafayette

Q. What subject do you teach?
A. Spanish

Q. What's your favorite book?
A. I love books, so I can't pick just one! “The Thirteenth Tale” by Diane Setterfield will bring you into its world and keep you turning the pages until you discover the thirteenth tale. La sombra del viento (“The Shadow of the Wind”) by Carlos Ruiz Zafón is a story within a story full of intriguing characters tied together in ways they could never imagine while revisiting the painful history of the Spanish Civil War.

Q. What's your favorite memory as an educator?
A. As World Language Department Specialist at Jefferson High School for many years, I had the honor of presenting the Jeffersonian award to the outstanding senior scholar in World Languages at graduation. The award is a surprise announcement at the ceremony and seeing their faces when learned they had been awarded the Jeffersonian always reminded me of why I became an educator.
Q. Why did you join ISTA? How long have you been a member of the Association?

A. I joined ISTA 24 years ago on my first day as an employee of the Lafayette School Corporation. I joined because it was clear from day one that ISTA is my professional association representing, promoting and defending my rights as an educator and working to create strong public schools for every student in Indiana.

Q. What motivated you to take a leadership role in ISTA?

A. I was encouraged to become an association representative in my second year of teaching and was nominated for Emerging Leaders soon after. I learned early in my career what a difference I could make for my colleagues and students by working with others statewide, and I have pursued doing so ever since.

Q. If you could fix one thing about the state of public education in Indiana, what would it be?

A. I would change the attitude of policymakers in the state legislature to ensure that they listened to the education experts on ALL education issues.

Q. What do you hope to accomplish during your term as vice president of ISTA?

A. I will continue to be a strong voice in the room with the Department of Education, State Board of Education and state legislature advocating on behalf of all members and our students. I’m also looking forward to implementing the scholarship changes made possible by the increased funding for the ISTA Foundation.

Q. What subject do you teach?

A. For the past 20 years I have taught K-5 technology. My time is split between both of our elementary buildings, John Simatovich and Union Center. I have also taught first grade, second grade and high ability.

Q. What’s your favorite book?

A. While there are many great books of literature that I have read in my lifetime, “The Chronicles of Narnia” by C.S. Lewis was the first series that captured my interest and developed my love and thirst for reading. I still own and treasure this magical series from my youth.

Q. What’s your favorite memory as an educator?

A. It’s hard to pick one favorite memory. There are so many. However, the memories of laughter have always brought me joy. So, I will share two.

On the last student day while teaching second grade, a little girl who I spent many extra hours with throughout the year was sobbing as we were saying our goodbyes. It brought
Q. Why did you join ISTA? How long have you been a member of the Association?

My membership with ISTA began 35 years ago. When I was initially hired, multiple teachers continuously checked in on me to make sure I had what was needed to start the year. My conversations with them were eye opening as to the strength and power of our collective body as a union and what was offered in the way of support, guidance, representation and legal counsel. I knew right away that Union Township Teachers Association (UTTA) was a family that I needed to be a part of. I would say at that stage of my career, I knew we were umbrellaed under ISTA and NEA, but hadn’t fully comprehended the magnitude and strength of these two incredible collective bodies.

Q. What motivated you to take a leadership role in ISTA?

Early in my career, UTTA had my back and local leaders assisted and offered advice while I was dealing with some sensitive matters. As the years progressed, I knew I needed to step up and be that person for members in my local. I value ISTA and want to ensure that this great organization is here to fortify generations of educators to come. The future of education and ISTA lies in the strength of our membership.

Q. If you could fix one thing about the state of public of education in Indiana, what would it be?

A. What needs to be fixed is the misguided perception of some of our state legislators who undermine the ability of educators who just want to teach and do what they have been trained to do.

Q. What do you hope to accomplish during your term as treasurer of the Association?

A. ISTA’s financial foundation is the stabilizing factor in our advocacy and support of our schools, educators and the children entrusted to us. My goal is to maintain and strengthen ISTA’s financial standing, ensure dues dollars are spent judiciously and be transparent with members regarding our financial status.
Extra Credit

Travel Discounts

Did you know that NEA Member Benefits has exclusive travel savings designed just for you to use in Indiana and across the midwest?

Here are some specific travel and activity savings to take advantage of this summer.

Parking
Enjoy covered parking, shuttle service, emergency car services, complimentary EV charging stations and a chance to earn free parking.

Hotels
Book a hotel room for a staycation or one-night get-a-way.

MemberDeals
Access deals on theme parks, Broadway and Vegas shows, movie tickets, hotels, concerts, sport tickets and more. ISTA’s partnership with MemberDeals has something for everyone.

Great Wolf Lodge Cincinnati/Mason
Enjoy family fun with indoor water park, 100 game arcade, MagiQuest, Build-A-Bear and More.

Beef & Boards
Enjoy a night of fun at a stage play with families or friends this summer.

For more information on ISTA discounts, please visit: ista-in.org/travel.
The Tony Award-Winning Musical Extravaganza!

**Sophisticated Ladies**

On stage through Aug. 20

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“It Don’t Mean A Thing”
“A’Train”
“Satin Doll”

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