

LPAC Training
June 15, 2026



What is I-PACE?



I-PACE is the political structure adjoining ISTA.

- I-PACE promotes the cause of public education in the state of Indiana through political action.
- I-PACE assists candidates, political parties, and committees favorable to education issues as determined by ISTA Representative Assembly resolutions and legislative priorities.



Current Membership – 15 members

Governance Districts 1-4	ESP
Tim Barr (Ft. Wayne)	Andie Renner-Miller (LaPorte)
Lauren Bridgeman-Kozy (Schererville)	ISTA-RETIRED
Kristina Schultz (BOD)	Rod Ellcessor
Governance Districts 5-8	ASPIRING EDUCATORS
Randy Studt (BOD); CHAIR	Alexia (Lexi) Shell (IVY-Tech--E'ville)
Christianne Beebe (Brownsburg); Vice-CHAIR	EX-OFFICIO VOTING MEMBERS
Angie Hood (Indianapolis)	Jennifer Smith-Margraf (ISTA President)
Governance Districts 9-12	Nate Williams (ISTA Executive Director)
Jennifer Walker (Newburgh)	Keith Zapp (ISTA Treasurer)
Samantha Pierce (Sellerburg)	STAFF NON-VOTING
Amy Mitchell (BOD)	Deidre Rasheed; Michael Lovely; Gail Zeheralis

ISTA GR Staff around I-PACE Work



Name	Position	E-mail	Phone
Deidre Rasheed	GR Director (Mgt)	drasheed@ista-in.org	317-766-2600
Camille Bell	I-PACE Staff Assistant	cbell@ista-in.org	317-771-1853
Michael Lovely	I-PACE Lead Staff	mlovely@ista-in.org	463-327-1483
Gail Zeheralis	I-PACE Assistant	gzeheralis@ista-in.org	463-327-2395
Chris Branam	GR Organizer	cbranam@ista-in.org	
Juli Davis	GR Organizer	jdavis@ista-in.org	317-331-9009
Callie Garrett	GR Organizer	cgarrett@ista-in.org	463-246-6257
Allison Haley	GR Organizer	ahailey@ista-in.org	574-520-8220
Lacy Hawkins	GR Organizer	lhawkins@ista-in.org	317-619-0900
Liz Schigur	GR Organizer	lschigur@ista-in.org	

NOTE: John O'Neal (joneal@ista-in.org), Rita Taylor (rtaylor@ista-in.org) and Mamie Morris (mmorris@ista-in.org) are also GR staff, not directly linked to I-PACE work, but as we are TEAM, they are available to you as well...

- **Deidre** is the GR Manager.
- **Camille** is Deidre's and I-PACE's assistant.
- **Michael** coordinates with the Organizers on I-PACE initiatives and sees the "state" pictured.
- **Gail** assists Michael.
- The Organizers (**Chris, Juli, Callie, Allison, Lacy, Liz**) work most directly with our specific L-PACs (and LATs when doing LAT work) and they have been assigned specific local areas.
- Organizers also work most directly with UD's when appropriate.

Units by Assigned Organizers



Area	Organizer(s)	Area	Organizer(s)
1-1	Lacy Hawkins	7-1	Juli Davis
1-2	Lacy Hawkins	7-2	Juli Davis
2-1	Lacy Hawkins	8-1	Chris Branam
2-2	Lacy Hawkins	8-2	Chris Branam
3-1	Allison Haley	9-1	Callie Garrett
3-2	Allison Haley	9-2	Callie Garrett
4-1	Allison Haley	10-1	Callie Garrett
4-2	Allison Haley	10-2	Callie Garrett
5-1	Juli Davis	11-1	Liz Schigur
5-2	Juli Davis	11-2	Liz Schigur
6-1	Chris Branam	12-1	Liz Schigur
6-2	Chris Branam	12-2	Liz Schigur

What Are L-PACs?

L-PACs are the local political action committees of I-PACE.



Who serves on L-PACs and I-PACE?

L-PACS

Elected by the District Council

I-PACE

Elected by the ISTA Board of Directors

NEA FUND FOR CHILDREN AND PUBLIC EDUCATION

The ISTA President serves as Indiana's NEA Fund representative.

PACE has Four Objectives

1. **Research, evaluate, and endorse** candidates for public office
2. **Collect and disburse funds** for contributions to endorsed candidates
3. **Mobilize volunteers** for the campaigns of endorsed candidates
4. **Facilitate member involvement** in the political process

PACE has six **Guiding Principles**

1. I-PACE will focus on issues directly affecting public education (students, educators and schools).
2. I-PACE will strive to build bipartisan support for public education.
3. I-PACE will be pragmatic by striving to only contribute to candidates who stand a realistic chance of winning based upon multiple, measurable criteria or are of strategic importance to ISTA.

Guiding Principles



4. I-PACE will be pragmatic by striving to only interview candidates in races that have strategic importance to ISTA.

5. I-PACE will consider the varied partisan affiliations of ISTA members when making decisions.

6. I-PACE will work to build more local and community support for public education (i.e., creating plans to support local initiatives, local relationships with public officials, coalitions and issue advocacy, as well as, working to engage members locally in politics).

More General “Stuff” about I-PACE



- Like all of ISTA-related work, **I-PACE is member driven** with significant staff involvement due to the “part-time” nature of I-PACE member commitments.
- Most recently, I-PACE has added a deeper focus to **school board elections and referenda**.
 - Rationale? Involves more members, supports grassroots advocacy, builds power, and builds a bench.
- In 2024, I-PACE also earmarked significant \$\$ to the **governor’s race**.
 - Again, because statewide races involve all members and the governor’s seat wields significant power over education-related policy.
 - State Budget Agency
 - Commission of Education (Katie Jenner)
 - Commission for Higher Education
 - INPRS (retired teachers)
 - 2026 is a mid-term election (non-governor/non-presidential)
- **Citizenship Grants** (I-PACE funded)
 - Encourages members to run for office (most any office, local or state).
 - Grant is either \$500 or \$1000, depending upon race.
 - Must apply/Non-partisan.
 - IMPORTANT: Not an “endorsement,” but recognition of a member’s deep and public commitment to involvement in public policy-making.

**I-PACE is taking
intentional
actions to
expand the
education
friendly
electorate...**



And I-PACE is working to improve bipartisan support for public education.



Current Legislative Landscape

House

Republicans–70 members

Democrats - 30 members

Senate

Republicans-40 members

Democrats - 10 members

Our 2026 Mission ~~is~~ is POSSIBLE!

Break some Supermajorities!

- **House would require a gain of 4 seats.**
- **Senate would require a gain of 6 seats.**



OBJECTIVE 1

**Research,
evaluate,
and endorse
candidates
for public
office.**

Researching a Race

1. NCEC DPI.
2. COH (cash on hand).
3. Ability to fund-raise.
4. Community connections
5. Previous political experience.
6. Paid polling.
7. Assessment of candidate's commitment to the campaign process.
8. Does the candidate have the time for this?
9. Assessment of candidate commitment to the campaign process.
10. Electability.
11. Will there be consequences during the legislative session for backing this candidate.
12. Other?

Should we be involved in a race?

1. Will winning this race make a difference?
2. How much will it cost to win this race in terms of money and volunteers?
3. What are the consequences of running a candidate in this race?
4. Are there any other factors we need to consider?
5. Does the race fit within the “guiding principles?”

The Process; in general.

1. *ALL* candidates should be invited to an interview.
2. Questionnaires are sent to the candidates after they commit to be interviewed.
3. Candidates are interviewed.
4. The first group who interviews makes a recommendation.
5. The second group determines concurrence/*endorsement*.
6. Money is **NOT** spent on campaigns that have not completed the process.

The Process; in general.

1. Endorsed candidates submit a detailed campaign plan.
2. Once the endorsement is completed, the candidate is eligible for funds and other supports.

Endorsement Summary

Local Races School Board Referenda	State Level Races (The Legislature)	Statewide Races (Governor, SOS, Attorney General, Auditor)
Individual Local recommends school board candidates or to support a referendum.	L-PAC recommends candidates for State Representative and/or State Senate.	I-PACE interviews and makes a recommendation.
L-PAC endorses (NO I-PACE action needed).	I-PACE chooses to endorse or not endorse.	L-PACs concur or do not concur.

Federal Level Races Summary

Congressional races

L-PACs interview Congressional candidates and make recommendation to I-PACE.

I-PACE concurs or does not concur with L-PAC and recommends to NEA Fund. NEA Fund has final say on endorsement and may contribute to Congressional candidates.

Presidential

NEA PAC Council makes a recommendation to the NEA-RA.

NEA-RA votes. Must pass the representative assembly. *(No NEA generally funds go to presidential candidates).*

OBJECTIVE

2

Collect and disburse funds from contributions to endorsed candidates.



Options Guaranteed

- **Contributions to Options Guaranteed are strictly voluntary because they are used for political action.**
- **\$24 is the suggested amount.**
- **I-PACE contributions go to local and state candidates who are friends of public education and to local referenda.**
- **L-PACs control their allocated funds.**

How PAC Money is Allocated

See I-PACE Budget

- 20% back to L-PACs for House and Senate races (called Local PAC rebate)
- 10% allocated to local races (school board, referenda, city council, county council, mayor races, etc.)
- Additional \$5000 lump sum allocation (in the 2-year budget) for school boards, specifically.
- Governor's race (on the 4-year cycle)
- House/Senate races (every 2 years; generally the balance of what is left)
- Civic Leadership Grant
- Polling
- Party/Caucus Events
- Voter Engagement
- Convention Delegate Support
- Website maintenance/Administrative Costs/professional fees/Income Taxes

NEA Fund for Children and Public Schools

- NO Options Guaranteed (I-PACE) money goes to federal candidates; this includes the Presidential election.
- Only NEA Fund for Children and Public Education contributions are used for federal races and federal efforts.
- Contributions to the NEA Fund for Children and Public Schools are strictly voluntary.

Endorsement Process for Local Races

School Boards, Referenda, and Local Races

- The local unit recommends school board candidates, referendum participation, and other local candidates.
- The L-PAC either concurs or does not concur.
- If the L-PAC concurs, then there is an endorsement by the L-PAC, *not the individual local.*

Funds for Local Races

- **L-PACs are given \$5,000 to use on local races every two years.**
- **This money does not appear in the L-PAC line item with other PAC funds.**
- **Approval to use these funds does not take I-PACE action.**
- **Individual locals can only access these funds with the vote of the L-PAC.**

What an Endorsement Means

Aligns with goals and ideals of the ISTA.

Endorsement is done by I-PACE, not ISTA.

The candidate “owns” the endorsement so it up to the candidate to release it, not I-PACE.

L-PACs are subcommittees of I-PACE; not independent, legal entities.



POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AT SCHOOL

Indiana Code 20-14-2-12 and 3-14-1-17 prohibit school employees from using school property to solicit contributions, to advocate the election or defeat of a political candidate, or to advocate “for” or “against” a public question.

SCHOOL PROPERTY

- Internet (WiFi)
- Email
- Computers
- Laptops
- Desktops
- iPads
- Software
- Cell Phone
- Printers/Copiers
- Supplies & Materials
- Bulletin Boards
- Classrooms

FAQ

If I am on my personal cell phone or iPad at school and using my personal email account?

If you are using school Internet or WiFi, the answer is the same, “don’t do it!”

I receive an email at my school email addressed from someone who is soliciting contributions, advocating for the election or defeat of a political candidate, or advocating “for” or “against” a public question?

Do not forward it, even to your personal account, or print out the email or any part of it. The law does not prohibit you reviewing this information, only sharing or distributing it.

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

It is always better to be safe than sorry. Communicate political information through personal equipment, accounts, and internet access OFF SCHOOL GROUNDS and OFF CONTRACTUAL TIME. Please feel free to contact your building administrators or me with specific questions or concerns.

LEGAL DO'S AND DON'TS

	OPEN LOCAL ASSOCIATION PAGE/SITE – ASSOCIATION FUNDS USED	OPEN LOCAL ASSOCIATION PAGE/SITE – NO ASSOCIATION FUNDS USED	CLOSED LOCAL ASSOCIATION PAGE/SITE	UD ADMINISTERED PAGE/SITE	LOCAL PAC PAGE/SITE**
URGE ELECTION OR DEFEAT OF A CANDIDATE	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
ENDORSEMENT LIST	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
PREARRANGE COMMUNICATIONS URGING ELECTION OR DEFEAT OF A CANDIDATE WITH A CAMPAIGN	NO	NOT WITH RESPECT TO ANY FEDERAL CANDIDATE, BUT OTHERWISE YES	NOT WITH RESPECT TO ANY FEDERAL CANDIDATE, BUT OTHERWISE YES	NO	NOT WITH RESPECT TO ANY FEDERAL CANDIDATE, BUT OTHERWISE YES
LINKS TO PAGE/SITE PAID FOR WITH PAC DOLLARS	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
LINKS TO PAGE/SITE OF CANDIDATE OR PARTY	YES, BUT CANNOT URGE SUPPORT OF CANDIDATE OR PARTY	YES	YES	YES, BUT CANNOT URGE SUPPORT OF CANDIDATE OR PARTY	YES
LEGISLATIVE OR POLICY COMMUNICATIONS	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
SCHOOL REFERENDUM SUPPORT	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES
NON-PARTISAN VOTER REGISTRATION AND GOTV	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES

OBJECTIVE 3

**Mobilize
volunteers
for
candidates
and
referenda
campaigns.**



**This is YOUR area of
expertise!**

...and Thank you!

Identifying Volunteers

- Activists tagged in the VAN (Voter Activation Network)
- Members who have expressed an interest; ALWAYS have sign-up sheets at events.
 - ISEA-AE Members
 - ISTA-R Members
- Community Members
- Family Members and Friends
- Members of other organizations
- Members of Other Unions

Ways to Involve Volunteers

- Work directly with campaigns.
- Make phone calls and write notes.
- Find election day volunteers ***early in the process.***



Ways to Involve Volunteers

- **Host a candidate virtual House Party for a candidate who support public education.**
- **Share with family and friends why supporting public education is so important to your community.**



Ways to Involve Volunteers

- **Post on Social Media about candidates**
- **Talk to family and friends about the importance of their vote and how it impacts public education**
- **Text your family and friends a reminder when they are voting**
- **Show your family and friends how to check their voter registration, find their voting site, and how to apply for absentee application.**

Coalition-Building



**I-PACE Partners with Other Unions
to Elect Friends of Public Education!**

Issue Campaigns

I-PACE partners with like-minded groups
to Elect Friends of Public Education!
COALITIONS OF COALITIONS!

OBJECTIVE 4

**Facilitate member
involvement in
the political process**

- **Communicate the relevance of election opportunities.**
- **Identify particular issues in the community and school corporation. Make the message & stories resonate locally.**
- **School Board meetings, third house meetings, and other community meetings either in person or via Zoom.**

Voter Registration



Check voter registration!
Check ***your*** voter registration!

Go to **indianavoters.in.gov**

Voter Registration Deadline for
November Election: October 5, 2026.

Important “Stuff”



- **School Board Races**

- **Candidate filing window:**
 - May 22nd through June 18th (noon)
- **Remember, on school board races, the local makes the initial decision on getting involved and recommending. The L-PAC concurs or not. I-PACE is not a decision-maker here.**

- **Referenda**

- **School Boards have likely determined by now whether to pursue.**
- **The local makes the determination on whether it will partner. I-PACE is not a decision-maker.**
- **However, we need to try to get a handle on what to expect here statewide!**
- **Report what you know to your ORGANIZER!**

Important “Stuff”



- **May 15 (noon); filing of a verified recount or contest petitions.**
- **May 19; first day that absentee ballot for the general election can be received.**
- **May 19; Voter Registration for the general Opens.**
- **May 19; Deadline (noon) to file a verified recount or contest petition.**
- **June 30; Deadline (noon) for an independent candidate to file with required signatures.**
- **July 6; Deadline (noon) write-in candidates.**
- **September 19; Deadline for county election board to mail absentee ballots.**
- **October 5; Voter registration ends.**
- **October 6; First day for early voting in circuit court clerk’s office or satellite offices.**
- **October 22; Deadline (by 11:59pm) for the clerk to receive an absentee ballot application when applicant requests to receive by mail.**
- **October 24; Circuit Court clerk’s office must be open for at least 7 hours for early voting. (exception of 4 hours in counties of less than 20,000)**
- **October 31; Circuit Court cler’s office must be open for at least 7 hours for early voting (exception of 4 hours in counties of less than 20,000)**
- **November 2; Deadline (noon); absentee ballot requests.**
- **November 3; ELECTION DAY.**

RESOURCES:



-
- Bank of Sample Questions to Ask in school board interviews Interview
 - Sample Candidate Invitations to Interview
 - Legislative Candidate Questionnaire (on-line)
 - Referendum and School Board Resource Materials



Together we can make a difference!