

ADVOCATE

AN INDIANA STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION PUBLICATION



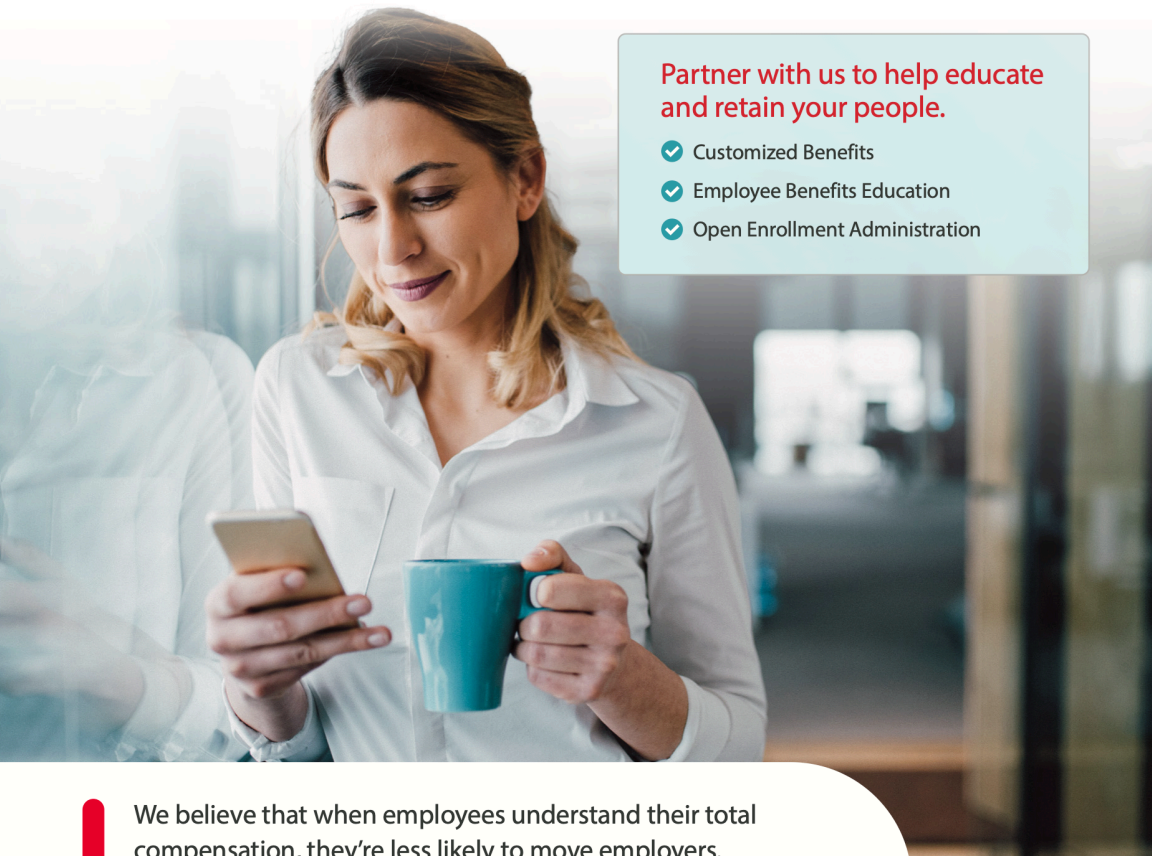
Leading with Purpose: A New Chapter Begins

DISCOVER WHAT ISTA MEMBERS ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THE 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR.

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MEET YOUR NEW ISTA OFFICERS, PRESIDENT JENNIFER SMITH-MARGRAF AND VICE PRESIDENT STACY KURDELAK. | PAGE 20

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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.



SUMMER 2025:
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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! As we begin a new school year, I know that folks are excited to finish setting up their classrooms, finalize their bus seating charts and meet the students and families that they will be working with this year. I'm excited to begin this school year in a new role as your ISTA president.

For those of you who I have yet to meet, I am a Spanish teacher with 25 years of experience on leave from the Lafayette School Corporation. I've been deeply involved in my local throughout those 25 years serving in many roles from association representative to membership chair to bargaining team member to local president.

A new year also brings new opportunities to share with your colleagues why they should be a member of our union. In each of the roles I outline above, I experienced firsthand that membership is power. The stronger our membership, the stronger our ability to enact policy that benefits our students and our members from our individual school buildings to the state house.

Membership is everyone's responsibility. Every one of our members knows someone who has yet to join and has a personal relationship to connect with them on why membership matters.



Jennifer Smith-Margraf, ISTA President

We know from surveys, and in my case, from personal experience, that one in five potential members would join immediately and haven't yet because no one has invited them into the union.

So, I'm asking you to add one more item to your back-to-school checklist this year. Add the name of that potential member that you have a personal relationship with and make time to have a one-on-one conversation with them to ask them to join our union.

Have a fantastic start to your school year!

In solidarity,

Jennifer Smith-Margraf
ISTA President

HOPES & HIGHLIGHTS

For the 2025-26 School Year

ISTA ASKED EDUCATORS WHAT THEY WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN THE 2025-26 SCHOOL YEAR. HERE ARE SOME OF THEIR RESPONSES.

“

In my 14 years of teaching, this will be the first-year teaching at a middle school. I'm curious about the new experiences being a middle school teacher will offer.”

—J.R. Buison, Mishawaka EA



“

I am looking forward to new colleagues who bring their own unique experiences and perspectives to the classroom. I am also looking forward to the opportunity to implement plans to help students improve their learning and overall performance in and out of the classroom.

—Sylvesta Morgan, Elkhart EA



“

I'll be moving to Veracruz, Mexico to teach at an international elementary school (sixth grade) for the next two years. I'm looking forward to learning culture that will enhance my Spanish teaching when I return to the U.S. I'm also looking to learn how to teach English through core subjects.”

—Carmen Paul-Garcia, UTA Center Grove





Weingarten Protections

Educators face a wide array of challenges in their roles, but they should never feel unsupported or vulnerable in their workplaces. It's essential to know your Weingarten Rights.

What Are Weingarten Rights?

Weingarten Rights stem from a landmark 1975 U.S. Supreme Court decision (*NLRB v. J. Weingarten, Inc.*) and protect unionized employees during investigatory meetings that may lead to discipline. These rights empower educators to request union representation during potentially disciplinary discussions.

Key Points About Weingarten Rights:



When They Apply

Weingarten Rights are triggered when an educator reasonably believes a meeting could result in disciplinary action.



How to Invoke Them

You must explicitly request union representation by saying, "If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my union representative be present." If representation is denied, you have the right to refuse to answer questions.



Employer Obligations

Once you request representation, the employer must either:

- Delay the meeting until a union representative is present.
- End the meeting entirely.
- Allow the employee to decide whether to proceed without representation.



Your Role

Be calm and assertive in invoking your rights. Union representatives can provide advice, clarification and advocacy during the meeting.

By invoking your Weingarten Rights, you ensure that you are not navigating these situations alone and that your voice is heard. ISTA is committed to supporting members by providing trainings and offering resources for members facing disciplinary actions.

For more information or assistance, contact your ISTA UniServ Director.



REVIEW EDUCATORS' RIGHTS UNDER THE LAW

Learn more about your rights as an educator.

WHAT IS



PACE?

**INDIANA POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEE
FOR EDUCATION**

The Indiana Political Action Committee for Education (I-PACE) is the political action division of ISTA. I-PACE is the only statewide political action committee solely focused on electing pro-public education candidates in Indiana. We assist candidates, political parties and committees who are favorable to education issues as determined by ISTA Representative Assembly resolutions and legislative priorities. The funding for I-PACE comes from voluntary contributions from ISTA members, independent and separate from ISTA dues.



I-PACE collects voluntary contributions from Association members and uses these contributions for political purposes, including, but not limited to, making contributions to and expenditures on behalf of friends of public education who are candidates for state office, local office, school board and to local referenda. Members wishing to opt out of contributions to I-PACE may do so by completing a PAC waiver which can be obtained from the ISTA website at ista-in.org or the ISTA Member Resource Center at 844-ASK-ISTA.



Options Guaranteed assures a member's option to give or not give to state and local political action committees of the Association. Full-time employees who are members contribute \$2 per month (\$24 per year); half-time employees who are members contribute \$1 per month (\$12 per year). Members may give the full amount or nothing at all, but no other amount is authorized. Members wishing to contribute more than these amounts should request and complete a separate authorization and receipt form. Checks should be made payable to I-PACE.



Contributions or gifts to I-PACE are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. Only U.S. citizens and permanent residents may contribute to I-PACE. If you are not eligible to contribute, please contact ISTA before completing this form and remitting your payment. No Options Guaranteed dollars go to federal races.



LEARN MORE

Learn more about I-PACE.



TEACHER APPRECIATION GRANT

WHAT'S CHANGING AND WHAT TO KNOW

Big changes are coming to Indiana's Teacher Appreciation Grant (TAG) program. Beginning with the 2025-26 school year, the stipend program that once recognized most teachers will become more selective and performance-based.

For nearly a decade, TAG stipends were awarded to the majority of Indiana teachers rated effective or highly effective. Educators valued the program because it acknowledged the shared contributions of teachers across grade levels and subject areas. In most districts, TAG stipends ranged from \$250 to \$600 per teacher.

Now, under changes enacted in the 2025 state budget (HEA 1001), the new TAG model will limit stipends to no more than 20% of certified teachers in a district each year. The awards will be based on a combination of student outcome data and additional performance criteria.

TO QUALIFY FOR A STIPEND, A TEACHER MUST:



Have taught in the same school or district for at least one school year prior.



Remain employed in that district when stipends are distributed.



Be identified as having a "significant impact on student outcomes" through national, state or local assessments.

Three stipend levels will be available:



Recognition
\$3,500

For teachers demonstrating high performance based on student outcomes.



Exemplary
\$5,000

Includes the above, plus mentoring another teacher or working in a high-need subject or shortage area.



Exemplary Plus
\$7,500

Meets all the above criteria, with added instructional leadership responsibilities and service in a shortage area.

Districts may also add their own local criteria. However, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) will develop a statewide rubric to guide implementation. That rubric has not yet been released.

Another major change is when stipends are paid. Instead of arriving in early December, districts will now receive funds from the state by April 15 and have up to 60 business days to distribute stipends, placing payments in late spring or early summer.

ISTA opposed the legislative changes to TAG, citing concerns that the new model excludes too many educators and may harm collaboration in schools. While we support recognizing excellent teaching, the new approach risks overlooking the contributions of many deserving professionals.

The current law includes a sunset date of June 30, 2027. ISTA will continue monitoring implementation and advocating for a fairer, more inclusive system that reflects the collaborative nature of the profession.

Look for more information later this year from the IDOE.



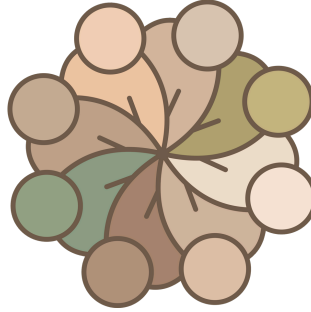
LEARN MORE

For more information, visit ISTA's website.



**LISA
MCINTYRE**

Lisa McIntyre is the president of the New Albany Floyd County Education Association. She is the ISTA district 12 board member and chair of district council 12.



WORDS OF WISDOM for Bargaining

Bargaining has become a puzzle most educators live through every two years, thanks to the Indiana Legislature. However, if educators are anything, we are flexible and will pivot to do what needs to be done. The bargaining process is different for every corporation, depending on the relationship that union leadership has built with the administrative leadership.

Here are a few items to keep in mind as we move into the 2025 bargaining season. I hope you have a successful time at the bargaining table.



1. Survey members and potential members. We traditionally send two separate surveys so that we can see the difference in the data between the two groups. Often, it is similar data.

2. Create a team with members from all areas possible i.e. various grade levels, subject areas taught, levels in career, etc. Everyone has something vital to bring to the discussion.

3. Ask your members for help. Responsibilities for members could involve providing food to feed the bargaining team, attending school board meetings to show solidarity and support for the team during the board vote and more.

4. Communicate regularly with members. We send Association Advisories out to members after all bargaining sessions. Make sure to provide an overview of the meeting (progress was made, proposals exchanged, etc.)

5. Do make sure to read the IEERB report about the 2023-2025 contract and make sure to make the changes suggested.



6. Stay positive in the meetings with administrative leadership. Wait until you are in caucus to be disgruntled.

7. Be professional and respectful. Listen to what they are saying.

8. Listen and ask questions. Make sure you understand what's being said and how the proposed language is interpreted.

9. Make sure to publicly thank the members of your team at the board meeting and encourage the board to vote yes for the new contract.

10. Celebrate with your team at the end of the bargaining season.



1. Don't use school-issued accounts or devices. Keep union work separate.

2. Don't rush the process. Take the time necessary to be thorough and deliberate at every stage.

3. Don't stress about the IEERB report. Even if it aligns with your 2025 contract, IEERB's interpretation may change by 2027, potentially leading to issues, even with your legal counsel involved.

4. Don't forget the deadline. The CBA must be ratified by both the union and the school board by Nov. 15. A public hearing is required before ratification, so plan backwards from that date to schedule your final bargaining session and allow time for ratification meetings and votes.

5. Don't wait until the last minute. Once the bargaining process is complete for 2025, there will likely be situations that require revisions, and therefore, language in the 2027 contract may need to be adjusted. A Collective Bargaining Agreement is an ever-changing living document.



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- Sign up for free life insurance
- Plan ahead for retirement

And so much more!

Scan below
to learn more



nea *Member
Benefits*

Meet Vince Lorenz, ISTA's Hoosier Educator of the Year



Vince Lorenz is a member of Kokomo Teachers Association. He works at Kokomo High School as the Earth Science/Geology teacher. This year, he was named the 2025 ISTA Hoosier Educator of the Year.

Q. How did you decide that you wanted to be an educator?

I knew that I wanted to be a teacher when I was in sixth and seventh grade, but I thought I wanted to be a history teacher. And like many people, I changed my mind. I took a career aptitude test, and it directed me to landscape design, which is totally different. So, I enrolled at Purdue in their landscape design program. And I found that that was not necessarily the fit for me, but taking science classes started to spark a little something. And so I got a job as a camp counselor on the weekends. During my time over at Purdue, I helped with nature hikes, kayaking, archery and riflery at camp Tecumseh, a YMCA camp. People would come up to me and they'd ask what education major I was taking at Purdue. I'd inform them that I wasn't majoring in education and they'd confirm that I was a natural. At that point, I began shifting my thought process. I wasn't really set on landscape design, so I thought about going back for science and education and ultimately that's what I ended up doing. I never really turned back from that. I worked part time doing landscape design work but became a teacher in my late 20s and I've done it ever since.

Q. How do you intentionally build relationships with your students and ensure that they are safe and comfortable in your classroom?

I spend a lot of time that first week of school building a community, a culture within my classroom. It's usually a week and a half before we really get into anything science related. We play some interactive icebreaker games, so that we can get to know one another.

Q. What would you say has been or is one of your favorite lessons that you've ever taught?

In my AP environmental science class, we have an outdoor lab and at the end of the year, I have my students write a letter to future students. They share what they enjoyed about the class, what incoming students should anticipate, etc. It's essentially a list of tips of how to be successful in my class. Some of the letters have been two or three pages long. But then that next school year during the first week of classes, we spend time getting to know each other. We go to the outdoor lab, the students space out and I give each of them a different letter that the previous students have written.

Q. What was your motivation to join the union?

Joining ISTA was of importance to me because I come from a strong union family. My mother was part of her union. She worked for a utility company. My father was an auto worker in Kokomo, and so he was part of the local union. My aunt was a benefit union rep for one of the auto workers in town. So, I knew that I wanted to be apart of the union because there are strength in numbers. It's important to have our voices heard and being able to communicate with other like minded individuals.

Q. How would you say that the union has helped you grow and develop professionally?

The union has exposed me to opportunities that I may not have had. One of those opportunities being the ability to travel and use paid benefit days for that travel. I had a very incredible opportunity to visit the Himalayas to write lesson plans for the National Science Foundation. I was not sure that I was going to be able to do so, but the strength of the union and the support and help of my fellow union members through the Kokomo Teachers Association allowed me to pursue that dream.

Q. What was your reaction to being awarded Hoosier Educator of the Year?

I have never been surprised like that in my life. They got me good. The school, KTA, ISTA, my wife and 17-month-old son were all in on it. I was so surprised. It was very emotional. It's a tremendous honor and I'm humbled. Credit goes to everyone that has supported me over the years including ISTA and KTA. I feel very fortunate for the administration that I have here at the high school and I feel very supported.

Q. What are some things you enjoy doing outside of teaching?

I love hiking. I have been to every Indiana State Park and reservoir except for one. I designate hiking as going to at least one trail and visiting the Nature Center for that park. So, I've done them all except for one. It's way down in Evansville. I also participate in 5K's, but I don't run. I competitively race walk. That's something I've done for about 16 years, and this was my sixteenth straight year to do the Indianapolis mini marathon. I love being outside, so anything outside or nature-related, you'll probably find me invested in. That goes along with my passions.

Q. What's a quote that you live by?

My favorite quote is "Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot, things are not going to get better. They're just not." That's Doctor Seuss and The Lorax.



Q. What's something that you're looking forward to doing within the next year?

It's happening in a little over a year, but I have a trip planned to visit Iceland. I've wanted to visit since I was in high school. I've always thought the Norse Viking culture was interesting, along with the land of fire and ice. I've heard wonderful things about it. I'm going to get to see a second total solar eclipse when I go, as long as it's not cloudy. That's something I'm really looking forward to.

Q. What are you looking forward to most for the upcoming school year?

Next school year, I am teaching a course through Ivy Tech called Earth Space Science, which I haven't taught in about three or four years now, but that's actually what my main teaching license is Earth Space Science. I teach all these specialty courses for the students, but I haven't taught Earth Space Science, so I get back into that teaching course and provide students with college credit through the dual credit option. I'm pretty excited about that and I'm looking forward to teaching that course.





CELEBRATING Excellence

Congratulations to ISTA's 2025 scholarship and award recipients!

Minority Educator of the Year

Terrell Taylor, Merrillville CTA

Dave Hanna Golden Touch Award

Judy Briganti, ISTA-Retired

Rod Elcessor, ISTA-Retired

Debra Marcum, ISTA-Retired

Community Service Award

*Andrea Renner-Miller, Michigan City
ESP*

Phillip Carey for Human Relations Award

Conner McNeely, Perry EA

School Bell Award

*Thomas Langhorne, Courier & Press,
Evansville, IN*

Friend of Education Award

*Melissa Moenter, Batesville Area
Arts Council*

Outstanding Senior Recognition Award

Hannah Nix - Hanover College

Brooke Weisner - Purdue University

ESP of the Year Award

David Renner, 4A ESP Individual

\$500 Scholarships

Eleanor Branam - Indiana State University

Han I "Elaine" Chuang - Purdue University

Kelsey Eder - Ivy Tech-Wabash Valley

Hannah Nix - Hanover College

Brooke Weisner - Purdue University

JD Miller Outstanding Local Student Leader Award

*Shantae Ferguson - Indiana University -
Indianapolis*

Outstanding Local Advisor Award

Kelly Stout - Ivy Tech - Wabash Valley

Outstanding Local Chapter Excellence Award

Ivy Tech - Evansville





NEA Member^{*} Exclusive

A trusted and valuable benefit

As an NEA member, did you know you receive \$1,000 of term life insurance at **no cost** to you? You're already enrolled in the NEA® Complimentary Life Insurance Plan, but it's a good time to make sure you've selected a beneficiary.

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**Scan the code or go to
neamb.com/mycomp for a
quick and easy path to update
your beneficiary information.**



Next Level Learning



At every stage of your career as an educator, there are always opportunities to learn and grow. From in-person workshops to virtual trainings, a wide range of professional development opportunities are available to help teachers sharpen their skills, explore new tools and stay ahead of the curve. Whether you're looking to dive into emerging technologies or enhance classroom strategies, these offerings are designed to support your continued success.

AI for K-12 Educators Ball State University

Online course; ongoing enrollment



This program will cover the benefits and risks of integrating AI into educational settings, providing hands-on experiences with AI tools for language learning, assessments and feedback. Teachers will also explore AI applications in generating lesson plans, developing lectures and creating assessments. Additionally, the course will include guidance on crafting a student contract for AI-generated content and will discuss ethical considerations specific to AI use in K-12 education.

Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator- Teacher Teams

National Education
Association

Aug. 28



Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams, is a series of trainings designed for teams to engage in together. In this member-led webinar, participants will explore key highlights and learnings of Building Winning Teams and will learn next steps for deeper engagement with the program. For this virtual event, joining as a team is optional; individual attendees are welcome.

Leaders of Multilingual Leaders Affinity Group Keep Indiana Learning

Aug. 12



Leaders of multilingual learners work in many roles and often face unique challenges and experiences. This affinity group provides a safe and supportive environment to address these issues, share best practices and build a sense of community. Each session will focus on a pressing need for the group and provide a platform to discuss ideas and policies as well as share resources.

MORE

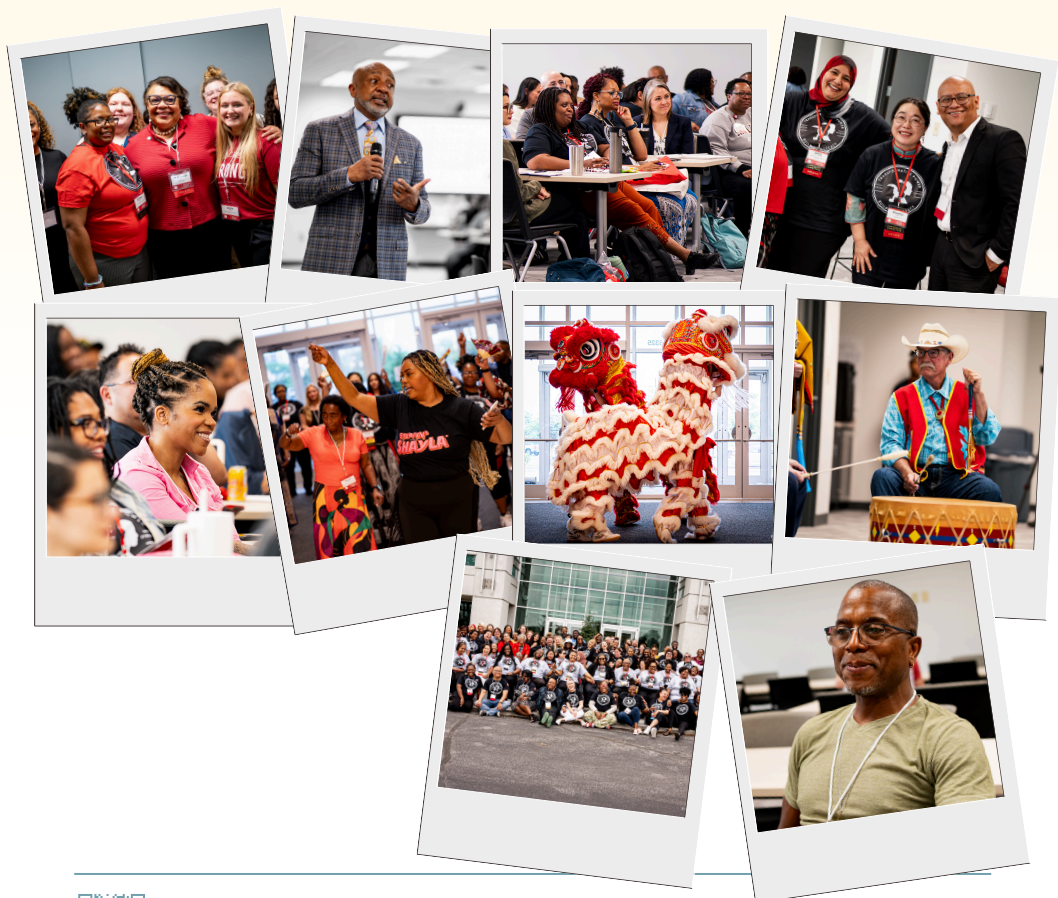
Interested in more professional development opportunities?

Check in with *Keep Indiana Learning*, *Get Your Teach On*, *Teach Indy* and more for upcoming events.

A LOOK BACK:

MOMENTS FROM THE 2025 INDIANA EDUCATORS OF COLOR NETWORK CONFERENCE

The 2025 Indiana Educators of Color Network Conference brought together passionate educators from across the state for three days of inspiration, empowerment and connection, June 5–7 in Indianapolis. Centered around the theme **“Transformative Power: Building a Legacy,”** the conference featured dynamic workshops, engaging activities and powerful moments of reflection and celebration. A highlight of the event was the keynote address by NEA Vice President **Princess Moss**, who spoke to the strength and impact of educators of color in shaping the future of education. With engaging sessions, vibrant conversations and of course, great food, this year’s conference was a memorable and energizing experience for all who attended.

**WATCH RECAP VIDEO**

Check out the recap video of the conference.

Meet ISTA's Newly-Elected Officers

At the 2025 ISTA Representative Assembly (RA), delegates elected **Jennifer Smith-Margraf** as ISTA president, **Stacy Kurdelak** as ISTA vice president and re-elected **Jessica Ramirez** as NEA Board of Director.



Jennifer Smith-Margraf

ISTA President

Q. Where do you teach?

A. I am a Spanish teacher for the Lafayette School Corporation. I spent most of my 25-year career at Jefferson High School.

Q. What's one lesson you've learned from a student that's stuck with you?

A. I've learned from many former students who I bump into in the community while they value being bilingual, it's the life lessons they learned in my classroom that have made the true difference in their lives.

Q. How do you stay energized and motivated as a leader and educator?

A. I make sure to make time for myself to recharge by spending time with family, taking walks outside, reading books and cheering on my Michigan Wolverines, Chicago Cubs and Purdue Boilermakers.

Q. What role do you think unions like ISTA play in shaping education policy in Indiana?

A. ISTA and our members play a huge role in ensuring that public education policy in Indiana reflects the needs of our students and educators. Whether it's meeting with legislators back home or at the State House, testifying in front of legislative committees or the State Board of Education or engaging community members, our members' engagement on public policy issues ensures real and substantive change for the better.

Q. What's one change you'd like to see in how the public perceives educators and education support professionals?

A. I would like the public to connect the dots that the true way to support public education and public educators is by voting for pro-public education candidates up and down the ballot at the ballot box.

Q. What's your vision for ISTA three years from now?

A. Three years from now, I envision ISTA consistently increasing membership through year-round organizing, regularly implementing our work to engage all of our legislators back home in our locals to positively impact our agenda, especially improving pay and working conditions and making significant progress toward our goal of ensuring that our leadership at all levels of our union reflects the diversity of our membership.



Stacy Kurdelak
ISTA Vice President

Q. Where do you teach?

A. I teach at Rensselaer Central High School.

Q. What subject do you teach?

A. I teach students with Mild, Moderate, & Severe disabilities in a LifeSkills program.

Q. What's your favorite book?

A. My favorite book is Animal Farm.

Q. Why did you join ISTA? How long have you been a member of the Association?

A. My family has a proud history of being union members in their respective trades/fields. I have lived first-hand the benefits of being a union member, so I was excited and eager to become a union member myself. I have been a member of ISTA since I began teaching in the fall of 1995.

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

A. I have a passion for advocacy and believe that it is our responsibility to be part of solutions if we want to make change. I began as a building rep, then worked my way up as I gained skills and confidence. I also want to build leaders along with me, so we continue to grow.

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

A. I hope to grow our membership not only in numbers, but in strength and advocacy. We are the protectors and defenders of public education, and we need to be engaged like never before.

ISTA Foundation License Plates Coming in 2026



Pending State Approval, Plates Would Support Scholarships

In an exciting development for ISTA members, the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) may soon offer a special ISTA Foundation License Plate starting in January 2026. This initiative is contingent upon approval by the State Roads and Transportation Committee, which is scheduled to meet in late August or September. Initial indications show progress, as BMV representatives have confirmed that the application has been reviewed and is in order.

The vision for the ISTA Foundation license plate was completed through the efforts of ISTA-Retired executive committee members and other ISTA Retired members. Their work resulted in the collection of over 650 signatures across 100 petitions, a key milestone in advancing this project. Special recognition is owed to Terry Tafflinger, whose creative idea sparked this initiative, proving once again that innovation and collaboration can pave the way for meaningful change.

Once approved and available, fees collected from the sale of the ISTA Foundation license plate will be directed toward ISTA-Retired scholarships. ISTA-Retired often raises funds for the ISTA Foundation District Scholarship, awarded to high school seniors who are children or grandchildren of current ISTA members. Scholarship recipients will be selected by both ISTA-Retired and active member committee teams. As the date of the State Roads and Transportation Committee's meeting approaches, ISTA members eagerly await the decision that could bring this vision to reality.

More information coming soon.



DONATE NOW

Donate directly to the scholarship fund by visiting the ISTA-Retired webpage.

THE HEART OF EDUCATION CELEBRATING THOSE WHO INSPIRE US MOST

During Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5 – 9), ISTA invited educators to recognize the colleagues who inspire them by sharing a short video or written shout-out. These heartfelt messages highlighted the educators who have made a meaningful impact. Here are just a few of the outstanding ISTA members who were celebrated.

Rachel Fields goes above and beyond for everyone. She helps others when they need a helping hand. She speaks kindly to her students and gives them a voice. She has had some students with rough home lives this year, and being at school with her gives them a feeling of comfort and safety. She even created a meal train for a coworker who was having a hard time personally with a sick family member. She goes above and beyond for the greater good of the school. It is so fun to work alongside Rachel Fields.

—Sarah Thomas, Mitchell EA



I would like to shout out Taylor Sotebeer. She is an excellent teacher, and an amazing colleague. Every one of her students is blessed to have her as their teacher. She goes above and beyond to meet her students where they are at, and help them excel!

—Hannah Dull, Concord TA



Miss Emily Race teaches at Crawfordsville High School. She has been a teacher and active union member for over a decade. I am blessed to call her a colleague. The way she can inspire her AP students to stretch further than they thought they could is amazing, but what is even more impressive is the way she encourages struggling learners and instills her passion for language arts into even the most reluctant learners. Every student comes out of her class not only better versed on the subject matter, but more importantly, they know she cares.

—Jennifer Veatch, Crawfordsville EA



Shout-out to DeAnna Williams, an incredible ELA teacher, colleague, and mentor! Her passion for teaching shines through in every lesson, and her support uplifts both students and fellow educators alike. Whether she's sparking a love for literature or offering a word of encouragement, DeAnna makes a difference every single day. Thank you for being such a powerful force in our school community.

—Mr. Chad Crabtree, Elkhart TA



I want to give a shoutout to my dear friend and colleague, Danielle Martin, who teaches third grade at Eastern Greene Elementary. Mrs. Martin is truly the kind of teacher every child dreams of having. She is kind, funny and endlessly accepting of every student who walks into her classroom. Her patience is remarkable, and her heart is even bigger. No matter how her day is going, she pours love and positivity into her students and they return that love tenfold. She leads with compassion, sets a beautiful example and is a true friend to all. We are incredibly fortunate to have Mrs. Martin as part of the EGES family.

—Kaitlin Price, Eastern Greene TO



Mark goes above and beyond every day for his students. He brought the We the People program to our eighth grade students. Every day, Mark builds relationships with his students, promoting positive culture in his classroom. Students learn all about U.S. History. His positivity, sense of humor and personality keep students entertained, educated and diligent community members! Way to go Mr. Harnew.

—Ashley Elliott, Union TWP TA



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