

#OurPublicSchoolsWork 

LET'S ELEVATE AND UNIFY EFFORTS

TO PROMOTE HOW OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS WORK

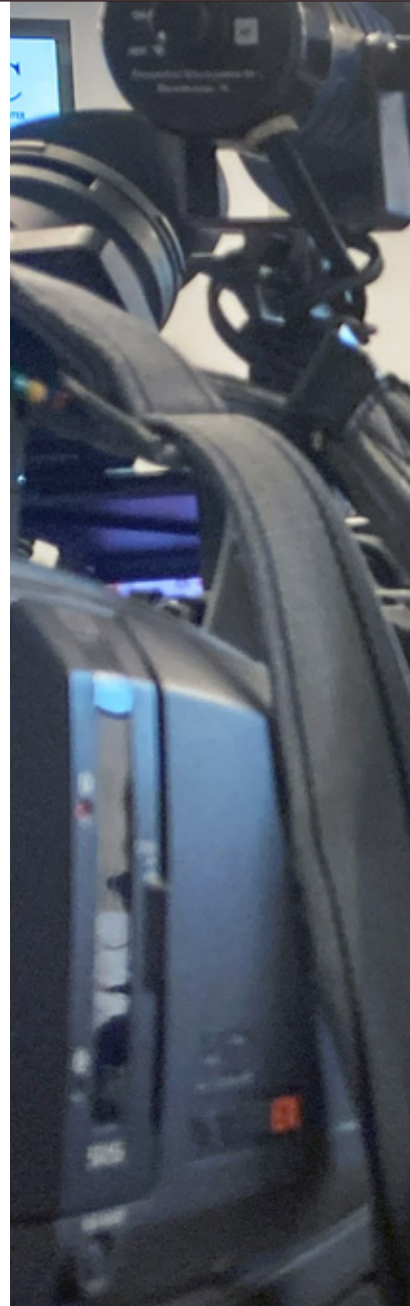
By Terry Spradlin, Executive Director



ISBA joined with a number of partner organizations on February 24, 2023, to officially launch the Our Public Schools Work (OPSW) coalition and campaign.

What an exciting and reaffirming event to celebrate the great things happening every day in our K-12 public school classrooms supporting our more than 1 million students. ISBA has long held the belief that public schools are a pillar of America's democracy, an engine of opportunity, and the pathway to college and career readiness. Success of our public schools will enhance the state's economy and quality of life for its citizens.

The concept of "positive externalities" is something we learned about in college economics. A positive externality is a benefit of producing or consuming a product that "spillovers" to benefit a general populous. For example, education is a positive externality of school because people learn and develop skills for careers and their lives. Ultimately, the higher the educational attainment level of our state, the greater number of wage-earning, tax-paying, and law-abiding citizens will result. Conversely, rates of incarceration or reliance on public assistance will diminish. An effective K-12 public education will greatly benefit all of us – nearly 7 million Hoosier residents!



Clinton Bullock, teacher and FFA advisor at Beech Grove High School



HIGHLIGHTS OF “OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS WORK” LAUNCH

Having served on the Plainfield school board since 2000, Scott Flood, the 2021 ISBA Outstanding Boardmanship Award recipient, spoke at the OPSW launch event and referred to data in a Gallup poll released in February by the Indiana Department of Education. “It’s no surprise 88 percent of Indiana parents are happy with their schools. It’s those who have no connection to and may be misinformed about our public schools that we need to reach. We need to show them how well our public schools work as the foundation for all other professions.

That’s what Our Public Schools Work is all about. Everyone in

our communities needs to know just how extraordinary our public schools are. Not just parents, not just kids, but everyone.”

THE OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS WORK COALITION REPRESENTS THE FOLLOWING GROUPS:

- ▶ Indiana School Boards Association
- ▶ Indiana School Public Relations Association
- ▶ Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents
- ▶ Indiana PTA
- ▶ Indiana Urban Schools Association
- ▶ Indiana Small and Rural Schools Association
- ▶ Central Indiana Educational Services Center

The coalition has incorporated as a nonprofit organization and is governed by a steering committee of representatives of each association.

Carmel native, Steve Inskeep, NPR's Morning Edition and Up First host was a featured speaker during the event and related the value of his public education at Carmel High School in the 1980s for his world travels as a journalist. "I never thought those Carmel Latin classes would mean anything, but they taught the value of language and thinking in different ways." Inskeep shared emotional stories about his grandmother who, despite a college scholarship, was unable to afford college and about his parents, both public school teachers, and the impact they had on him and the students they served. He pointed to numerous accomplishments, achievements, innovations, and impact of Indiana's public schools on students, teachers, and communities. Reflecting on his experiences in war-torn countries of the world, Inskeep emphasized the mandate that we must preserve democracy. And to do that it is vital to have informed, educated citizens. Public schools are essential to achieving that end, he said.

He appeared live, virtually.

As compelling stories that championed public education were the student voices heard during the event. Katherine Langford, Avon High School senior and Lilly scholar, focused on the many school-community connections that provide support and inclusion for students in her public school. One of those opportunities she turned into a program called RISE that empowers girls through reading. "My public school makes sure that everyone has a voice and can feel included. Not only through vocational schools, mental health resources, and special education programs, but also through school clubs. We have over 50 school clubs. Everything from rock climbing to chess club to African diaspora to Girls Who Code. There is a place in public education for every kid."

Other student leaders spoke passionately about Mill Creek Community School Corporation's opportunities as a small school district, the success of Beech Grove's urban agriculture program through FFA, and the cooperation of government and business in the Lebanon Community School Corporation's internship program. Josephine Morrison, a Lebanon High School student who interned with the Lebanon Mayor's office, spoke proudly about creating a countywide e-recycling program.

Roman Contreras, a student at Crawfordsville High School and member of the student First Indiana Robotics student board of directors, said he had gone from "just being at school to enjoying being at school." Contreras works part-time in the high



Top to Bottom: Andrew Melin, executive director of the Central Indiana Educational Service Center; Mariah Richardson, senior at Cascade High School; Dr. Robert Stwalley, school board member for the Lafayette School Corporation and past president of ISBA.

school office as an IT technician helping teachers and students work with their Chromebooks.

Tara Cocanower, IDOE 2023 Teacher of the Year from Bluffton-Harrison schools, shared a video message emphasizing the power and necessity of educating every child and her expectation that those children will be "world changers, because that is the power of a public school education."

Sharita Ware, 2022 IDOE Teacher of the Year, said she begins



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each morning “breathing hope, strength and purpose” into her students through the STEM – science, technology, engineering and math – programs she teaches at East Tipp Middle School.

Principals of the Year Ryan Langferman, Milan High School, and Dr. Danny Mendez, Seymour Middle School, shared personal stories of the passion they feel for the privilege and responsibility of being public school educators.

To watch this event and access resources that you can use to join this campaign, please go to: OurPublicSchoolsWork.org

WHAT’S NEXT FOR OPSW

Celebrating the “good news” in K-12 public education as the school year nears completion provides a great opportunity for earned media. Please be intentional to share the good news about seniors in the Graduating Class of 2023 – their academic achievements, certifications, awards, and scholarship news, and their post-graduation plans for employment, military enlistment, or enrollment in postsecondary education. OPSW will soon launch its next campaign titled, “I am a proud public school graduate” and will ask for user generated videos and content that also focus on the theme “I am the Class of 2023.” A scholarship will be announced for students to pursue by participating in this campaign. A toolkit for local school corporation use will be distributed toward the end of April. Stay tuned for this information.



Our Public Schools Work resources can be found at OurPublicSchoolsWork.org/toolkit

During the summer, share news of the many ways you continue to support students and their families and provide community access to school facilities. Then, plan to promote more positive news with the excitement that will come with the start of the next school year. OPSW will also prepare a campaign toolkit to seize on the excitement of “back to school time.”

YOU HAVE INCREDIBLE STORIES TO TELL

Please consider how your school corporation staff can participate in this campaign to shine a light on all that is right in K-12 public education in Indiana, including spotlighting your world-class programs, rich curricula, and bold initiatives. Celebrate



Top to Bottom: Roman Contreras, senior at Crawfordsville High School and member of the FIRST Indiana Robotics Student Board of Directors; Sharita Ware, Indiana Teacher of the Year for 2022, East Tipp Middle School; Scott Flood, Plainfield Community School Corporation Board of Education, and ISBA Outstanding Boardmanship Award recipient for 2021.

the accomplishments, achievements, and the efficiencies of your schools, students, teachers, and staff. Focus attention on the wide array of engaging educational experiences that exist in public schools today to meet the diverse needs of students, parents, and the community, including career and technical education programs, work-based learning opportunities, and graduation pathways. Accentuate caring school leaders who go above and beyond the call of duty on behalf of their students, model

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collaborations with employers and community groups, award-winning robotics clubs, nationally recognized counseling programs, technology trail blazers, and prestigious performances in the fine arts and athletics.

HOW YOU CAN ENGAGE

The Our Public Schools Work Coalition asks that local school districts get involved by aligning local PR campaigns to the coordinated quarterly statewide campaigns, while generating and submitting their good news stories via a submission page on the OPSW website. Success stories will be compiled and showcased on a campaign landing webpage and will be shared on social media. OPSW will also identify, produce, and distribute a series of one-page fact sheets highlighting positive trends on noteworthy state-level performance indicators (e.g., economic impact, dual credit attainment, FAFSA completion, closing the achievement gap, honor's diplomas, NAEP, Jobs for America's Graduates, Advanced Placement, etc.). OPSW will create a communications toolkit for local school leaders with resources to use to "tell their own story." OPSW will also periodically develop public service announcements for video and radio.

SCHOOL CORPORATIONS SHOULD CONSIDER:

- ▶ **Use the social media graphics** at least once a month on Twitter and Facebook to show your support for the Our Public Schools Work campaign
- ▶ **Add the Our Public Schools Work launch video** to your website
- ▶ **Incorporate the Our Public Schools Work logo** into your district's weekly newsletter
- ▶ **Film the valedictorian's graduation speech this Spring and submit a clip** from the speech to be used in OPSW's forthcoming "I am the Class of 2023" campaign video.
- ▶ When you do participate in the campaign, make sure to **inform your school board members** 🗣️



2023 CALENDAR AT-A-GLANCE

MAY 1-16

ISBA Spring Regional Meetings

Statewide

JUNE 1

ISBA June School Law Seminar

Ivy Tech Conference Center

JUNE 13

ISBA/IAPSS/IASBO Budget/Finance Seminar

Ivy Tech Conference Center

AUGUST 18

ISBA/IAPSS Collective Bargaining Seminar

Ivy Tech Conference Center

SEPTEMBER 25-26

ISBA/IAPSS Fall Conference

Indiana Convention Center

NOVEMBER 1-20

ISBA Fall Regional Meetings

Statewide

DECEMBER 8

ISBA December School Law Seminar

Ivy Tech Conference Center

For more information on ISBA meetings and locations visit our website at www.isba-ind.org