



# The Montage

PEA's Newsletter  
November, 2013  
Volume 5, Issue 4

# Happy Thanksgiving!



## Use Your Voice!

Neil Linville, President

If you have been following the news, you've seen many headlines about the rising drama among Supt. Glenda Ritz, the rest of the state school board members, and the governor. In case you didn't know, of all the members of the state school board, Glenda Ritz is the **ONLY ELECTED** official. The rest are appointed by the governor. Furthermore, I fear that a push will be made by state leaders to make Supt. Ritz's currently-elected position an appointed one. I don't think I need to tell you that this would be a slap in the face to the voters who elected her.

What can you do? I strongly encourage you to send an email to Governor Pence AND your state senator and representative urging them to let Supt. Ritz do the job she was elected to do. **If you choose to email or call, use your personal computer/email account/phone, and do this outside of contracted school hours.** I realize this makes contacting them more inconvenient, but it's important for them to hear from voters. As educators, we know that there is already much work to do in teaching our students, and good, strong leadership is needed to ensure we are able to do this. Consider contacting your state rep., senator, and the governor soon.

To find out who your state rep. and senator are, visit <https://indianavoters.in.gov/PublicSite/PublicMain.aspx>. Then, once you've found them, visit <http://www.in.gov/legislative/> to find the contact information for them. You will also be able to start here when looking for the contact information for Governor Pence.

Although stated as such, contacting your elected officials isn't easy, and it does take a little time. My hope is that this information has reduced the amount of time needed.

## Membership Privileges and Benefits

Many of you already know of the Health Trust's (HSBT) medical clinic on South Harding, but did you know that you can install an app on your smartphone to enable you easier, more convenient appointment scheduling?

Also, as the holiday season is fast approaching, you should consider using NEA's Click and Save benefit. You can save money on purchases from various dept. stores and such. Visit <http://www.neamb.com/shopping-discounts/nea-click-and-save-retail-discounts.htm>. You will need your ISTA member number. If you do not have a membership card—we haven't had any issued for a couple of years—contact your building rep, and we will make sure you get it so you can take advantage of this membership perk.

Hoosier School Benefit  
Trust Health & Wellness  
Center  
6925 South Harding St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46217



Mobile Enabled

Go to: [www.mywebahead.com/hsbt](http://www.mywebahead.com/hsbt)  
with your smartphone and select an  
appointment time.

If you are using an iPhone, you will be given  
the option to add this link to your home  
screen. Android users can bookmark the  
site for future use.

Questions 317.497.6140



### PEA Leadership

Neil Linville (PMHS), President  
Matt Henninger (PMHS), 1<sup>st</sup> V.P.  
Danielle Brooking (PMA), 2<sup>nd</sup> V.P.  
Steve Dawson (PMHS), Treasurer  
Kyle Hanefeld (GV), Secretary  
Matt Henninger, Membership Chair

Perry Education Association  
P.O. Box 47432  
Indianapolis, IN 46247-0432  
<http://www.perryea.org>  
789-4414, PEA Office

- HSBT Health and Wellness Center  
6925 S. Harding Street  
497-6140
- 24/7 Nurse Line (888-279-5449)
- Anthem Member Services (800-345-2460)
- Employee Assistance Program (800-647-9151)



## What's Best for Our Students?

By: Kyle Hanefeld, Secretary

I know we can have a long, healthy, and passionate debate on whether or not TAP is what's best for our students. With much certainty, I believe that I fully comprehend the TAP model, how it is to be implemented, as well as why we find ourselves in this current state of education reform. However, I am still unable to form a solid belief in TAP since its inception over a year ago. So as I sit here and write an article on what's truly best for our students, I want to focus the TAP debate towards our students' needs in the classroom in relation to evaluation scores.

Since the end of school last year, I've have had conversations that have happened during a "what's best for kids" approach of official evaluations. You could classify some situations as being teachable moments, a carry-over lesson because time was lost due to technology issues during the previous lesson, as well as having to reteach an idea or concept for further mastery. I would like to believe that these issues represent a sound educational practice of doing what was necessary to improve upon or reach the larger scope of a lesson or unit of study. Unfortunately, some of our colleagues have found scores within particular indicators reduced as a result of doing what was best for their students.

Now it would be wrong of me to suggest that all evaluators would score a lesson lower due to using a what's-best-for-the-

students type of an approach. However, if stories like these have happened and are happening, then I believe we need to take a step back and reflect upon what is most important. However, is this doing what is within the confines of 19 indicators, or is the right thing providing sound instruction for the betterment of our students?

Recently, a committee of administrators and PEA teachers of various areas and grade levels addressed both positives and negatives that we see occurring with our current TAP implementation. The issue of doing what's right, what's best, for our kids, which resulted in a lower score as a result was discussed. This issue, alongside many others, appeared to be well received by the administration, and a future meeting will be set to continue this discussion. Needless to say, your collective voice has been heard, and we continue to take your concerns to the administration.

During my years of teaching, I've developed a firm belief that if your position or argument can ultimately be supported by what is best for the student, you cannot lose that battle in education. I believed that back then, and I firmly believe that is true today, despite some occasions when an evaluation model noted it as being less effective. Over the course of the next couple of months, I believe we should take a fair and reflective look upon the impact TAP is having on our students. Regardless of our ultimate opinion with TAP, we owe it to our students and to our profession to continue to do what's best for them.



## The Dawson Monologue

By: Steve Dawson, Treasurer/HSBT Board Member

### TRF Update

In the previous issue, I wrote about changes to the Teacher Retirement Fund. Since that time, as expected, there has been legislative involvement. You will recall that the Indiana Public Retirement System Board of Trustees (Board) had voted to reduce the amount that retirees receive and to use an outside provider for annuities. The legislative Pension Management Oversight Commission (Commission) has requested that the Board continue to manage the annuity portion but to set a rate which will not create an unfunded liability. The Board responded that it does not think that it can meet that request.

The Board has postponed any changes until it receives more information from the Commission. The Board is scheduled to meet on December 13. I will keep you informed of its decisions and the impact on you.

You can follow the Board at [http://www.in.gov/inprs/board\\_of\\_trustees.htm](http://www.in.gov/inprs/board_of_trustees.htm) and the Commission at <http://www.in.gov/legislative/interim/committee/pmoc.html>. Rarely do I wish for more legislative involvement, but in this case, it might be helpful.

### Feeling Stressed?

The second most common diagnosis at the HSBT Health and Wellness Center is anxiety/depression. A little over a year ago, it did not make the top fifteen list. It comes as no surprise to those working in schools that there is a very high level of stress.

Those of you with health insurance through HSBT have access to Anthem's Employee Assistance Program. This **confidential** service provides telephone counseling, face-to-face counseling, online resources, and legal and financial services. Access services through [www.anthem.com/eap/](http://www.anthem.com/eap/) or call 800-647-9151. To login, enter Hoosier School Benefit Trust.

You can receive help with relationship and family problems, alcohol and drug abuse, anxiety, depression, and stress. Representatives are available 24/7. There is no cost for you to use this program, and everything is **confidential**. Even if you think that you do not need this program, it is worthwhile to login and see what is there. There are many online articles and seminars about many topics.

And, if you are wondering what the most frequent diagnosis is—it's hypertension.



## It's *My* Career

By: Matt Henninger, 1st Vice President

Being a relatively young man and being relatively new to education, I've got a lot to learn. One thing, however, I have learned is that I must take ownership of this career that I have chosen. Education did not start with me, and it will not end with me. I am merely a player in the game. That being said, I often feel like I've joined in the middle of the game and was not present at the beginning to hear all the rules, policies, procedures and the like. When I started teaching, it was like I was always playing catch-up or being left in the dark. I'm sure many teachers have felt that same way. I remember my first days of school and my first department meeting. I remember hearing seasoned veteran talking about "best practices," and I was left wondering if that was the title of some sort of book that I was supposed to have read. We talked common assessments, case conferences, courses of study, Curriculum Mapper, in-services, professional development... and I was completely lost.

Quickly, I had to learn that I had to take responsibility for this career that I had chosen. It was on me to find the right resources that would help me figure things out. I began to find those veterans, and I asked questions. When they spoke, I tried to listen and soak up as much as I could. No one was going to spoon feed me anything. These other professionals didn't have time for that. Nobody has time for that. Being an adult, I had to figure it out, or I knew that I wouldn't be a very good teacher. I worked to understand this world that is education. I realized that I *could* understand. Since then, I've tried to work hard to stay in touch with the things that are going on around me, the important ones anyway. Moving forward, I need to make sure that I'm informed as I can be in all of the areas that might affect me, my classroom, my school, my township. I need to track my own salary. I need to work to understand the world of insurance as it relates to me. I need to understand that I'm ultimately responsible for my retirement accounts. I need to try to stay in tune with legislation that can potentially impact education. This is my career, and I have to own it. I think we all need to own it.



## Are Your Students Powering up in Your Classroom?

By: Danielle Brooking,  
2nd Vice President

Have you ever been excited about a lesson, but something went wrong with the technology so you threw the lesson out the window? Or, you found something really cool to motivate your students but didn't use it because you were afraid the technology wouldn't work properly? I am sure you can think of more than one lesson I am describing.

The Perry Township Technology Department is available to help you. If you need immediate assistance, call the HELPDESK (ext. 3750). Shelley Alexander answers most phone calls and emails. She is very knowledgeable and willing to help all computer literacy levels. If she can't fix your problem over the phone, she will get a technician to you as soon as possible to help you in person. You can also fill out a work order by following the link at the bottom or

by using the link on the MSDPT homepage, under "Quick Links."

We are fortunate to have some of the best technology around, but don't be afraid to use it or ask for help. There are technicians who are available and willing to stop by your classroom to show you how tools work, to teach your students how to use tools, and to troubleshoot your problems. If you don't tell them something is broken, the technology department won't know, and they can't fix it.

Also, be aware of the resource portal with several technology resources for you and your students to use in your classroom. It, along with other helpful information, can be found under the Staff & Students Resources tab on the township homepage or by using the links below.

Work Order: <https://www.myschoolbuilding.com/myschoolbuilding/itdgateway.asp?acctnum=5189632>

Resource Portal: <http://websites.msdpt.k12.in.us/staffd/>