

Opinion

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INDIANA OPINION

Table REPA II

From the Journal Gazette, Fort Wayne

The first indication of how Indiana's education establishment will respond to election results could come Dec. 5, when the State Board of Education is expected to consider more changes to licensing requirements. The proposed Rules for Education Preparation and Accountability II have drawn strong protests from teachers, administrators and teacher-education officials across the state.

Given that Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett was soundly defeated in his re-election bid, pushing the proposal through before he leaves office is the wrong approach. Voters spoke loudly about the aggressive tactics Bennett and his department used over the past four years. Delaying any changes until Superintendent-elect Glenda Ritz has time to respond is the best course.

As proposed, REPA II would:

- Eliminate the requirement for principals to have a master's degree.
- Create an "adjusted" teacher permit available to anyone with a bachelor's degree and at least a 3.0 grade-point average in any area, provided he or she passes a content area test.
- Allow a teacher licensed in any subject area to add other licenses, including special education, early childhood, music and art, by passing a test.

"That we would expect anyone to teach a special needs child with expertise solely on the basis that he or she passed a standardized test is certainly inviting a spectacular failure," Gerardo Gonzalez, dean of the School of Education at Indiana University-Bloomington, testified last June.

At least one state board member shares the same reservations about some provisions.

"The main areas where I have concerns are special education, because I really feel there are a lot of things in special education that you have to know," said Michael Pettibone, superintendent of Adams Central Community Schools. "You have to know the laws, the regulations regarding (individualized education plans) and timelines. The other area concerns who is able to provide licensing and how broad that picture is."

He said the current requirement of a college-level teacher preparation program gives Indiana "some type of a gate" to the classroom.

Pettibone also questioned the wisdom of dropping the master's degree requirement for licensing level administrators.

"I think possibly the one person who can have the most impact on learning is the building principal," he said.

"To be a successful building principal, you need to have experience as a teacher and you need to have shown growth in your field."

Department of Education officials have argued that critics are confusing licensing and hiring — school districts don't have to hire minimally licensed teachers and administrators.

But it's not hard to imagine they eventually could be forced to do so — posing on more qualified candidates because of budget restraints. It's also no coincidence that provisions of REPA II are among the model bills pushed by the conservative American Legislative Exchange Council.

Bennett has participated in activities of the national group, where mostly Republican lawmakers and business representatives meet to develop policy initiatives that inevitably benefit for-profit companies such as those that sell standardized tests and virtual learning programs.

While Pettibone was the only state board member to attend the June public hearings on the licensing proposal, he said he believed there were others who had concerns.

He also said he hoped Ritz will revisit the licensing proposal, he said he believed there were others who had concerns.

"I have confidence in many of the state board members that they are looking at what's best for children in education," he said. "I think they will be listeners and work with Glenda Ritz to make good decisions."

If the Department of Education moves ahead with its licensing revision next month, the first step in listening to and working with Ritz would be to table REPA II — indefinitely.

MICHIGAN LEGISLATURE

I have contact information for Michigan state legislators within The Tribune's circulation area:

State representatives:

Starrin Tyler, R-Vicks
Matt Lutz, R-Constantine
Al Paschella, R-Silverville
Write to the representatives at: House of Representatives, State Capitol, Lansing, MI 48913

State senators:

John Press, R-St. Joseph
Write to the state senators at: Senate, State Capitol, Lansing, MI 48913

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

Manage diabetes for better health

According to the American Diabetes Association, 25.8 million adults and children in the United States have diabetes. While an estimated 18.8 million have been diagnosed with diabetes, 7 million people still remain undiagnosed.

For some, diabetes may go undiagnosed because the symptoms seem harmless. But, early detection can help decrease the chance of complications such as heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure and blindness.

Today, we know more about who is at risk for diabetes and physicians are better able to diagnose the disease. Once diagnosed, not only can physicians better help people monitor their diabetes, they can also help them understand that diabetes can be effectively managed.

We also know that diabetes is more common in certain ethnic groups — African Americans, Latin Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are genetically predisposed to developing diabetes. They diagnosed, it's important for individuals to follow the program their physicians prescribe, whether this includes medication or a specific change in lifestyle such as diet and exercise.

Autism Blue Cross and Blue Shield, which serves Indiana's Hoosier Healthwise and Hoosier Indiana members, works closely with members with diabetes. Members can get valuable information and

support from Anthem's Diabetes Management Program.

Diabetes is a disease that can and should be manageable to avoid complications.

Dr. Kimberly Rapp
Medical Director, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield

Fiscal cliff

There is much talk lately about the "fiscal cliff" and national debt. It's unsettling what a couple of trillion-dollar wars and military in 130 countries will do to mess up the budget, not to mention the defense contract.

That Eisenhower warned against all this tax talk kind of reminds me of the old Blues Albert King standard, "Everybody wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to pay taxes!" The Bible sums up the story best: "Honor to God what is God's, render to Caesar what is Caesar's." It is as simple as Jesus' Christian ethics, pay your taxes, especially the rich man.

Jim LeMay
South Bend

Get it done

Brendan Moore's letter (Nov. 17) makes a wonderful point. Without the need for a paper ballot, our voters, especially those with disabilities, Members can get valuable information and

actually get counted! In

many cases, they're not, due in part to the extremely long process involved in getting mail to them if they happen to be overseas.

They have to request an absentee ballot from their county of residence. The county must mail them a ballot in time for them to fill it out and mail it back as it's received by Election Day.

If they were allowed to vote electronically, their votes could be counted faster and more accurately. Like

Moore said, "let's get it done!"

Deb Meyer
South Bend

Ban burning

I was a Scoutmaster. I also was on the adult training committee and got the high school honor in adult scouting, the wood badge. I taught my boys how to build a safe fire, considering fire and safety around the campfire.

People who burn leaves pollute the air, cause health problems and promote global warming. These politicians need to get off their hands and ban burning leaves because they're ruining it for the rest of us.

Royal Clark
Dixie



VIEWPOINT

Cultural venues deserve your thanks

By MARINA WILSON SMITH

The holiday season that I receive go right up on the yellow ledge in my well-lit kitchen window so I can treasure them for several weeks before I clear them off and start over. Then comes the hard part: recording each one and deciding whether to discard it or not, depending on its author, charm and newsworthiness. Since I am an enthusiastic collector of these intimate qualities, I keep my notes, indefinitely deferring their ultimate disposal.

Despite treasuring them, I fall short of writing many minutes that fit through my mind. Recently I attended "Sean Lake" at Indiana University South Bend and was delighted by the excellent orchestral music and the excellent dancing of a program that included the premiere of a beautiful composition, "Amelia," in honor of

the adventurous aviator. The music accompanied a new film compiled from Amelia Earhart's speeches and riveting footage taken during early flight around the world. An understated production of "Sean Lake" followed this visual and musical homage. Driving home, I thought I should write a note of appreciation to INSB's Dean of the School of the Arts, Marvin Curtis, who leads his faculty and students with such enthusiasm.

Then again, I thought the same thing last week, when making my first visit to the Civil Rights History Center and National Center for African American Research and meeting its director at a talk given by Phil Dixon on the history of Negro League Baseball. It was part of a collaborative undertaking, "Triple Play: Race, Baseball, Art," the anchor for Triple Play is the exhibition of vivid paintings by Kadir Nelson at the South Bend Museum of Art. "We are the Ship: The Story of Negro League Baseball." Many people and institutions joined to carry out this project. The South Bend community owes all of them a cheer of thanks.

We are fortunate to have many cultural venues to enjoy music, drama and ballet performances by professionals, talented amateurs and ambitious students. We are also blessed with museums that offer fascinating exhibits for all ages, including local operations at the Starbuck Museum, the Center for History and the Ruthmore House Museum. Visual arts are displayed at locations that include the South Bend Museum of Art, the Seale Museum, the Jewish Federation of St. Joseph Valley, the Midwest Museum of American Art, and the Moreau Art Gallery. The Moreau Art Gallery, the Moreau Museum offers exciting interactive exhibits for families.

I have often heard you been to one of these museums?

A recent study by a museum association claims that 75 percent of Americans have not been to any sort of museum during the past 10 years. Does that statistic apply to you? The doors are open to most area museums at no cost. The others, patrons can borrow a free pass from the public library and bring their family or a memorable visit. I urge you to make a thank-you visit with your feet by going to see a museum you have not visited before, or by attending a concert in a new or familiar venue. Then, you may want to join me in writing, or daydreaming about writing, thank-you notes to the many people who make our community a place where the arts flourish.

Marina Wilson Smith is president of the Board of Trustees of the South Bend Museum of Art. She lives in South Bend.

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