

Superintendent News

WARRICK COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION
ADMINISTRATION CENTER

This Edition:

The effort to Privatize
Public Education

ISTEP+ Scores, School Grades Delayed Yet Again

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October 28, 2013, and school officials, parents, teachers, and all other Hoosiers are still waiting on final 2012-2013 ISTEP+ results. The continued delays are yet another black eye and embarrassing moment for Indiana and our critically flawed school accountability program. Last spring hundreds of thousands of Hoosier students had their on-line ISTEP+ testing interrupted numerous times as ISTEP+ testing provider CTB McGraw-Hill did not have enough server capacity to handle all the on-line testing of Indiana students. Then this summer the grade changing scandal of Dr. Tony Bennett was exposed. You will recall DOE personnel, under the direction of Dr. Bennett, “tweaked” the A-F grade calculations of prized charter school Christel House, to ensure the school’s initial grade of a C was raised to an A. Even while 66% of Christel House students failed the state Algebra exam! Now, we wait as the Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana State Board of Education argue over the future direction our state’s educational programs will “wander” off to next. Embarrassing to say the least, worrisome to say the most.

It will now be November before the state releases final ISTEP+ scores and school and corporation letter grades for 2012-2013 are announced. 2013-2014 School Improvement Plans have also been delayed. Our state requires every school to complete a School Improvement Plan each year. State statute requires that these plans incorporate data to drive instructional improvements to increase student learning. Yet the State of Indiana can’t seem to get their act together and provide our schools with the ISTEP+ data until November. This is all a direct result of politicians using education as a political football. The A-F accountability program is in shambles. I know of not one school administrator that feels the current accountability program is fair, transparent, or accurate. Politicians are using the A-F accountability program, Common Core, and ISTEP+ to further their own political agenda and privatize public education in our state. This dangerous game is something all Hoosiers should be greatly concerned with, as it will have lasting impacts on our economy, our schools, and our commitment to educate every student.

As the start of the 2014 legislative session draws near, I hope every Hoosier pays close attention to proposed legislation that deals with education. I hope you will contact your local representatives and implore them to support public education and end the push of outside forces to privatize public education in our state. Do we really want charter schools from Florida running Indiana schools? Do we really believe it’s right to fund private and parochial schools with taxpayer dollars? The latest Phi Delta Kappa public opinion poll finds the vast majority of Indiana residents rate their local public school an A or B. That begs us to ask our elected officials why they continue to support vouchers, charter schools and other efforts to privatize public education in Indiana? The government is suppose to be of the people, by the people, and for the people. If our public doesn’t get involved in this debate soon, our public schools, and kids, are going to be the big losers. Privatizing public education is a really bad idea. Does anyone really think our schools primary purpose should be to maximize profits? For the sake of everyone, let’s hope the final answer to that is NO!

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