

THE MONTAGE



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The Mad Dash; Don't Lose Sight Neil Linville, President

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Special points of interest:

- **HSBT Health and Wellness Center**
6925 S. Harding Street
497-6140
www.mywebahead.com/hsbt
- **24/7 Nurse Line** (888-279-5449)
- **Anthem Member Services** (800-345-2460)

A headline from the October 28th *Indianapolis Star* read, "Pence: ISTEP decline won't hurt teachers." At the time of your reading this newsletter, some weeks have passed, but I wish to provide some insight into the Pence article and to urge you to action.

In recent years, it's become apparent that many elected officials, the governor, many state senators, and many reps, are in campaign mode now. Their names will be on the ballot in November of 2016—a huge election year—and I am challenging teachers to remain ENGAGED in the political process. Why? Frankly, your salary and benefits come from the roughly 52% of the monies allocated to public education in the state budget. The state legislature controls this along with the ability to legislate laws that impact our profession. Your financial livelihood depends on these funds. Many current legislators, along with the governor, have enacted laws in the past 7 years that have damaged public education. Charter schools are receiving more attention; vouchers are being touted, and with the decimation of our bargaining rights in 2011, elected leaders have sent teachers the message that we are expendable. Sure, there's a push to increase starting wages for new teachers, but there isn't much being done to hold on to veterans. WE MUST NOT FORGET THAT THEY SENT THIS MESSAGE! We must ensure we put elected officials on notice by using our votes. **What can you do to remain ENGAGED?**

1. Be sure you are registered to vote. Visit www.indianavoters.com to either register to vote or update/confirm your voter registration. **Do this ASAP** to ensure you can vote in this spring's primary and next fall's general election.
2. Vote! I know this sounds like a given, but I am amazed at how many teachers do not vote. I do, however, hear teachers voice concerns about evaluations, salaries, benefits, calendars, teacher hours, and much more. While we have a collaborative relationship with our administration, your vote for education-friendly candidates, which will put them in office, is crucial to ensure that PEA has even more leverage to work on the issues that concern you most.
3. Remain informed. Read the emails coming from PEA regarding the election and legislative session. Talk about what our current elected officials have done to our profession with family and friends. If you don't know specifics, ask me.
4. I plan to hold member meetings off school grounds to freely and candidly discuss the election and candidates in the spring and next fall. When the information comes out, make sure to attend this meeting.

Folks, the time to react to what has happened at the statehouse is OVER. If you want more positive work environments, even better raises, more voice in academic discussions, then it is time to evict those in office who do not appreciate teachers and elect new leadership who will strengthen our profession. **This can't happen without your involvement.** Stay tuned.



The Dawson Monologue

By: Steve Dawson, Treasurer/HSBT Board Member



You Are HSBT

The Hoosier School Benefit Trust (HSBT) is not a big and mean insurance company—it is you and I. We pool our premium dollars, along with employees from Beech Grove, Decatur, Franklin, Lebanon, Southside Special Services, and CIESC, to pay claims. WE contract with Anthem to administer claims, and because of Anthem's vast network, WE receive large discounts from medical providers.

Each school corporation has one teacher representative and one administrator on the board of directors. I am your voice in that group. The goal of the board is to provide the best medical care possible at the best price.

The best way to control premium costs is to keep employees healthy. Toward that goal, HSBT has partnered with Community Hospitals to open three Health and Wellness Centers. There are no office visit co-pays, and many medical needs can be met. To schedule an appointment, call 497-6140 or go to www.mywebahead.com/hsbt. There are wellness coaches available at no cost to you to help with goals such as weight loss, chronic disease maintenance, and smoking cessation.

HSBT has recently partnered with Smart Shopper. Not only will you pay less and receive a cash incentive, but you are helping control spending from our pool of money. If your physician orders a medical test or procedure, contact Smart Shopper at 800-824-9127. If that procedure is one for which there is an incentive, and if you use the suggested provider, you will receive a cash incentive. The amounts range from \$50-\$500 depending on the test. For more information, go to www.vitalssmartshopper.com.

Remember that every dollar that the corporation spends on health insurance is a dollar that cannot be bargained for your salary. Everyone is responsible for controlling health care costs.

Free Money

If you have not yet moved your VALIC 401(a) account from annuities to mutual funds you should. The reduced fees for the mutual fund platform will likely save employees thousands-of-dollars over the course of their careers. See one of the VALIC representatives as they visit schools, or contact Amber Morris (697-0880, amber.morris@valic.com) or Jeanne Lowe (989-6090, jeanne.lowe@valic.com).

