



June 28, 2010

2010-2011 Board Members

Arthur W. Hafner, President
Ball State University
AHafner@BSU.edu

James L. Mullins, Vice President
Purdue University
JMullins@Purdue.edu

Mary G. Persyn, Treasurer
Valparaiso University School of Law
Mary.Persyn@Valpo.edu

Eileen Saner, Secretary
Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminary
ESaner@AMBS.edu

Daniel J. Bowell, Member at Large
Taylor University
DNBowell@Taylor.edu

Janet L. Brewer
Anderson University
JLBrewer@Anderson.edu

H. Frank Cervone
Purdue University Calumet
FCervone@Calumet.Purdue.edu

J. Susan Clark
Ivy Tech Community College
East Central Region
JSClark@IvyTech.edu

Alberta D. Comer
Indiana State University
AComer@IndState.edu

John Fribley
Ivy Tech Community College, North
Central
JFribley@IvyTech.edu

Brenda L. Johnson
Indiana University Bloomington
JohnBren@Indiana.edu

Susan Ohmer
University of Notre Dame
SOhmer@ND.edu

Scott H. Silverman
Earlham College
SilveSc@Earlham.edu

Robert A. Slayton
Vincennes University
BSlayton@Indian.Vinu.edu

Cheryl Truesdell
Indiana University Purdue University
at Fort Wayne
Truesdel@IPFW.edu

Judy Tribble
Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College
JTribblwe@SMWC.edu

Susan Akers, Executive Director
Indiana Library Federation
941 E. 86 St., Ste. 260
Indianapolis, IN 46240

Dear Susan Akers:

The value of school libraries and school library media specialists cannot be under-estimated. School librarians collaborate with classroom teachers to contribute to a student being able to discover, evaluate, analyze, think critically about information and integrate it with their existing knowledge. This skill set is often referred to as "information literacy," which employers look for in hiring.

Despite the evidence of the importance of school libraries and librarians to student success, Indiana school corporations are eliminating many school librarian positions. This is certain to have a detrimental effect on the educational success of our children, who need, now more than ever, the skills to succeed in an information rich society.

The Indiana Administrative Code (*511 IAC 6.1-5*) requires that "all schools shall have a media program that is an integral part of the educational program. A licensed media specialist shall supervise the media program. Each school shall spend at least eight dollars (\$8) per student per year from its 22200 account to maintain its media program." Indiana's Department of Education states that schools that do not meet one or more of the state's academic standards will result in that school receiving a "provisionally accredited, legal standards only" status.

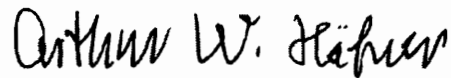
Valid studies find a statistically significant correlation between the quality of a school library system and student academic performance. The most recent study found that schools tend to "perform better on ISTEP+ tests where there were better-staffed, better-stocked, and better-funded school library programs." (*Association for Indiana Media Educators, 2007*).

School librarians, as information specialists, promote a student's understanding of needing more than one resource to develop a complete comprehension of a topic. Librarians teach students how to articulate their

research questions, develop effective search strategies, identify authoritative resources, recognize bias, fallacious reasoning, use and communicate information ethically. Clerical staff are not trained for this and classroom teachers have other priorities. One school librarian in each school is an excellent and necessary investment in terms of quality education and economic return since the librarian supports all grades, teachers, and administrators.

The Board of Directors and members of the Academic Libraries of Indiana are very much concerned about the decisions that the school corporations are making about school libraries. We strongly urge you to re-examine the contributions that they make in your efforts to graduate students from Indiana who are competitive with those graduating from other states. With strong school libraries staffed by library professionals, our students can develop the skills to succeed whether they attend an institution of higher learning or go directly into the workforce.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Arthur W. Hafner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'A'.

Arthur W. Hafner, Ph.D., President
Academic Libraries of Indiana