

Corporate School Boarding "Indy Style" by Dr. Doug Martin 11.05.12 in Schools Matter

It happened in New Orleans, it happened in Denver, it happened in Florida with the Vice President's brother, and now the mega-rich are buying the Indianapolis Public School Board race, with many of the same hedge fund managers and the Walmart family tossing their dirty money into the ring. Local grassroots education activist **John Harris Loflin**, who authored a truly progressive plan for IPS that the media seldom mentions, breaks the corporate funding down for us in an e-mail sent out a few days ago, noting the following candidates for the Indianapolis school board who are being purchased by the wealthy: <http://vorcreatex.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Democracy-for-Sale-What-happened-in-Denver-in-2011-will-happen-in-Indianapolis-in-2012.pdf>

Caitlin Hannon of Teach Plus (Dist. 1) reported \$57,437.00

Sam Odle (At-large) reported \$41,000.00

Gayle Cosby (Dist. 2) \$16,880.00

Caitlin Hannon of Teach Plus: Donations came from local contributors Many were national: Brooklyn and Armonk, NY; Far Hills, NJ; Denver; Palo Alto, San Francisco, Whitter, and Atherton, CA; Boston; Washington, DC (Leadership for Educational Equity; Democracy Engine LLC); Phoenix; Glenside, PA; and, Omaha.

Sam Odle: There are no out of state contributors reported; yet, how many of those giving live outside the IPS district?

Gayle Cosby: A donation of \$5,000.00 from **Stand for Children** (in-kind: campaign management) \$5,000.00 and another of \$3,356.00 from Democrats for Education Reform (in-kind: data management).

Let me connect some corruption.

CAITLIN HANNON: THE WORST POSSIBLE CHOICE

Caitlin Hannon is the Network Coordinator for **Teach Plus**, the **Mind Trust**/Bill Gates funded anti-teacher seniority outfit.

As I've written before, the **Mind Trust** spin-off, **Teach Plus**, recruits young teachers, trains them to question seniority in the teaching profession, and pits them against older, more experienced teachers who, instead of being criticized, should be looked up to and learned from. Started by **Mind Trust** Education Entrepreneur Fellow Celine Coggin (who was nominated by Paul Reville, Massachusetts Secretary of Education and charter "Innovation Schools" advancer), **Teach Plus** hires people to write studies claiming that once the governor closes down low-performing schools in Indiana, lazy senior teachers will replace the jobs of younger ones at other public schools in the district, what they refer to as the "Domino Effect." In their anti-seniority attack, they have \$4 million from the Gates Foundation to infiltrate six cities over three years, including Boston. The **Teach Plus** fellows in Indianapolis also focus on "advancing a reform agenda based on improving teacher evaluation and staffing policies," or to press for an agenda where teachers are based primarily on how well their students do on the state ISTEP test.

Hannon's employer has sold corporate school in the Hoosier state, extensively. Jim Larson, who now shovels the rich's coal as a part of Mayor Ballard's team, was a **Teach Plus** Indianapolis Teaching Policy Fellow. Not surprisingly, Larson, too, has donated to the Hannon cause.

If this were not enough, Hannon was a member of NYC lawmaker Brian Kavanagh's corporate education team. Another member of Kavanagh's staff, Patrick Van Keerbergen, who also was a mayor Bloomberg flunky, now is the New York Field Director for Democrats for Education Reform. During the corporate buyout to lift the charter school cap across NYC, DFER spent mega-bucks supporting corporate candidates like Basil Smikle who, Ken Libby found, had gotten \$159,065.20 in donations, mostly from corporate school reformers and real estate moguls who also make money by investing in charter schools.

DFER has funded Hannon's campaign, too, as has DFER's hedge fund star Charles Ledley, Jr. Ledley runs Cornwall Capital, headquartered in Berkeley, California. A board member of Harlem Village Academy and Leadership Village Academy Charter Schools, he has thrown money into neoliberal candidates and donated to the Black Alliance for Educational Options, a group dedicated to, in Ralph Ellison's words, "[Keep\[ing the\] Nigger-boy Running.](#)" In 2008, along with DFER's Boykin Curry, John Kirtley, and J.C. Huizenga, Ledley helped sponsor the BAEO annual symposium in New Orleans. He has also filled the campaign chest of Gloria Romero, the DFER crony in California, and has donated to the Boston Preparatory Charter Public School. Ledley's claim to fame is appearing in Michael Lewis' *The Big Short*, as an example of one of the few who profited from the 2007 subprime mortgage disaster. Ledley helped fund the charter school expansion in NYC, too.

The Fournier family, as well, is donating to Hannon. Alan Fournier is a hedge fund manager and a New Jersey Republican. As Joanne Barkan has [noted](#), Fournier helped buy out New Jersey with Michelle Rhee and a few other school corporatists:

In New Jersey, Rhee connected with two hedge-fund managers—David Tepper, a Democrat, and Alan Fournier, a Republican. The duo had recently joined the club of no-expertise-in-education billionaires dedicated to changing public schools. In March 2011, Tepper and Fournier launched a 501(c)4 called Better Education for Kids, Inc., and a super PAC called Better Education for New Jersey Kids, Inc. During the summer of 2011, the super PAC spent about \$1 million on TV and radio commercials to promote Republican Governor Chris Christie's ed reform program. In the fall, the super PAC gave \$400,000 to support four pro-reform candidates for state Assembly: two, both Democrats, won; the two Republicans lost. Since then, the 501(c)4 has been offering New Jersey teachers \$100 gift certificates to participate in private meetings about teacher evaluations. Tepper and Fournier's super PAC and 501(c)4, it turns out, constitute the New Jersey branch of Rhee's StudentsFirst. The ed reform network expands while remaining knit together by money and the strength of the moral crusade.

Greg Penner, who is married to Carrie Walton Penner of the Walmart family, has also handed cash to Hannon. But not every donor is from out of state. The same Hoosier corporate crew that has been behind the privatization of Indiana schools is funding Hannon, too.

Al Hubbard has also purchased Hannon. Tony Bennett praised Hubbard when the Indiana supt. of corporate schools received the Walmart award last year. Hubbard used to direct the National Economic Council for George W. Bush and was old man Bush's deputy chief of staff. This year, when Mitch Daniels was flirting with running for the presidency before the little uproar about his wife surfaced, Hubbard was onboard to help. An Indy CEO of an acquisition company and many others, Hubbard used to chair the Indiana State Chamber of Commerce, sits on the Hudson Institutes board, as well as Park Tudor School and Indiana's own corporate school outfit, the Educational CHOICE Charitable Trust. Hubbard has helped raise cash for both Tony Bennett and Mike Pence this year. In June 2012, Daniels appointed Hubbard to the Bill Gates' funded Indiana Education Roundtable.

One Hoosier, Darrell Gene Zink is the leader of the Avondale Meadows [gentrification project](#) for Strategic Capital Partners. He has been on the board of directors of a whole slew of corporations, including Coke and Citizens Gas. When the charter school was founded, Zink was directing the Indianapolis Chamber of Commerce. He has also been involved with the Park Tudor High School, a private school in Indianapolis. Gene Zink is heavily

invested in other corporate education reform efforts in Indiana, too, including the front group Educational Choice. A one-time Fifth Third Bank director, Zink in 2007 loaned \$52,000 to the Charles A. Tindley Accelerated School, a charter run by EdPower, the company the Indiana Department of Education has chosen to “turnaround” Indianapolis’ “failing” Arlington Community High School. The interest rate on this loan is unknown.

As mayor in 2006, Peterson had approved Zink’s Strategic Capital Partners’ proposal to build the Challenge Foundation Academy in Indianapolis’ Avondale Meadows district. At the Indy charter, which was honored by Tony Bennett in 2010, two SCP members still sit on the board of directors, Zink and Charles J. Garcia, who has also directed the Central Indiana Corporate Partnership (CICP) which with Conexus Indiana offers online degree programs to “prepare Hoosiers for manufacturing and logistics careers.” Conexus Indiana is led by Indiana Educational Roundtable member and consultant to the Indiana Department of Education Carol D’Amico, a former George W. Bush-appointed National Board for Education Sciences board member. D’Amico also has sat on the board of the Indiana Public Charter School Association and the rightwing Sagamore Institute for Policy Research. CICP was also instrumental in advocating the end of social promotion in early elementary classes in Indiana, an initiative first started by Jeb Bush in Florida. Among many others, CICP’s board of directors include members from JP Morgan Chase, Sallie Mae, WellPoint, INC., Duke Energy, the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation, and Eli Lilly (the last two being big funders of the **Mind Trust**).

Other Indiana corporate schoolers funding Hannon include IN DFER’s Larry Grau, Tina Bennett (Tony’s wife, if anyone needs to know), William Shrewsbury (the **Mind Trust** and Indiana Charter School Board member), and Nancy Meyer Brown of Indiana **Teach for America** and Indy Teaching Fellows fame.

GAYLE COSBY’S LAST’S STAND

Stand for Children is also pimping pamphlets around town (I’ve been told), working for the rich in the Indy school board takeover. Along with the hedge funders at DFER, **Stand for Children** seems to be running Gayle Cosby’s campaign, both giving in-kind service.

In one of the most outlandish incidences of corporate school reform in recent history, **Stand for Children’s** Jonah Edelman was caught on tape speaking bluntly at the Aspen Institute’s Ideas Festival about buying Illinois Democratic state politicians to spread a corporate school agenda. Edelman was introduced by billionaire and trustee of the Aspen Institute, James Schine Crown, who called the Chicago and Illinois schools “awful” but praised the wealthy scab-workers at **Teach for America** for stepping in to help. As George Schmidt [points out](#) in a commentary to the speech’s video which was posted around the internet after the Aspen Institute deleted it from their website, the Aspen Institute praised Arne Duncan’s “Chicago Miracle” just two years earlier, then, when the time was ripe to try to privatize Illinois schools even more, claimed the Chicago schools were in immediate crisis and students would suffer if politicians didn’t take steps to pass anti-seniority teacher bills and other laws detrimental to public education.

At the speech’s inception during a lunch session on June 28 in the Koch Building at the Aspen Institute, after speaking of how Advance Illinois, led by Bill Daly before he joined Obama’s White House, set out to burden Illinois teachers with new evaluations, Edelman detailed how he and several hedge fund managers financially supported the 2010 elections of Democrat and speaker of the Illinois House, Michael Madigan, after the teachers unions had threatened to give up their support of the leader since he supported a 2010 pension reform bill, which would affect future teachers. Edelman gave the names of these hedge fund managers, but didn’t mention specifically that they are hedge fund managers with a drastically different motif than helping children. These hedge fund managers who helped **Stand for Children** buy out Madigan and 9 other politicians, six of them Democrats, were James Schine Crown, Brian Simmons, Ken Griffin, Matt Hulsizer, and Paul Finnegan. James Schine Crown is president of the public and private securities and real estate investment company, Henry Crown

and Company, Brian Simmons works for the hedge fund company, Code Hennessy & Simmons, Ken Griffin is the CEO of another hedge fund managing company, Citadel LLC, Matt Hulsizer is the CEO of the Peak6 Hedge Fund, and Paul Finnegan heads Madison Dearborn Partners. These individuals, obviously, are gearing up to loan money to new charter schools, where they will probably sit on the board, using the taxpayers' money to pay back the loan and collect interest, which will increase their hedge fund money double fold in a matter of a few years. Edelman bragged that the media never caught on, thinking his group would support Republicans, since many of the hedge funders were Republicans themselves and normally give to Republicans during elections.

What Edelman said next at his Aspen outing is honestly quite sickening, so I [quote](#) from it extensively:

"After the election, Advance Illinois and **Stand** had drafted a very bold proposal we called Performance Counts. It tied tenure and layoffs to performance. It let principals hire who they choose. It streamlined dismissal of ineffective tenured teachers substantially, from 2+ years and \$200,000 in legal fees, on average, to three to four months, with very little likelihood of legal recourse, and, most importantly, we called for the reform of collective bargaining throughout the state. Essentially, proposing that school boards would be able to decide any disputed issue at impasse. So a very, very bold proposal for Illinois, and one that six months earlier would have been unthinkable, undiscussable

"And after the election, I went back to Madigan and I confirmed, I reviewed the proposal, and I confirmed his support, and he was supportive. The next day he created an education reform committee and his political director called to ask for our suggestions for who should be on it. And so in Aurora, Illinois, in December, out of nowhere there were hearings on our proposal.

"In addition we hired eleven lobbyists, including the four best insiders and seven the best minority lobbyists, preventing the unions from hiring them. We enlisted a statewide public affairs firm. We had tens of thousands of supporters. And with Jim's, and many others stepping up, Paula and Steve, thank you, we raised \$3 million for our political action committee between the election and the end of the year. That's more money than either of the unions have in their political action committees.

"And so essentially what we did in a very short period of time was shift the balance of power. I can tell you there was a palpable sense of concern if not shock on the part of the teachers' unions in Illinois that Speaker Madigan had changed allegiance, and that we had clear political capability to potentially jam this proposal down their throats, the same way the pension reform had been jammed down their throats six months earlier. In fact, the pension reform was called Senate Bill 1946 and the unions took to talking to each other about it like, 'we're not going to allow ourselves be 1946ed again,' using it as a verb."

Stand for Children used \$242,300 from the **Mind Trust** and \$150,000 from the Joyce Foundation to sweep into Indiana and lobby for Senate Bill 1, the legislation which makes it easier to fire teachers and make annual teacher evaluations based primarily on student performance, or the ISTEP test.

In early April 2011, former Indianapolis deputy mayor Karega Rausch was hired to head **Stand for Children** in Indy. Rausch had been a big player in Bart Peterson's quest to privatize the Indianapolis schools, and Stand for America was recruited into Indiana by Peterson's **Mind Trust**, so it was a perfect fit. Rausch was chosen in September 2011 by Republican Brian Bosma to sit on the newly formed Indiana Charter School Board. Around the day of this appointment, Indy mayor Greg Ballard announced his five-point plan to bring even more charter schools to the city by giving the so-called nonprofit fake boards who run the schools generous tax breaks. As Scott Elliott reported in the *Indianapolis Star*, Ballard would work with the **Mind Trust** to "incubate quality charters, using up to \$2 million from his Rebuild Indy program as startup funds to help attract five high-quality charter school organizations to open schools."

A few weeks earlier, Rausch had spoken at the **Mind Trust's** "Grow What Works" dinner at the Indiana Landmarks Center, a program to help raise over \$18 million in new corporate school funding for the city. Later that night, along with **Teach Plus**, **Teach for America**, and the New Teacher Project, **Stand for Children** was given even more funding from the **Mind Trust**, as was College Summitt, run by former **Mind Trust** fellow Earl Martin Phalen, money which came from the \$100,000 the Indiana University Health had donated to the **Mind Trust** for the event. Sitting down to breakfast with Tully in April, Rausch had the nerve to say (and Tully had the nerve to print it) that the voices of parents, teachers, and students "are too often drowned out by the special interests," by which he means the teachers unions. The billionaire boys club of **Stand for Children** is about as "special interests" as we can get.

See the original article at http://www.schoolsmatter.info/2012/11/corporate-school-boarding-indy-style_5.html