

# IPLA

*Div. of the Indiana Dept. of Education*  
**Indiana Principal Leadership Academy**



# SPECIAL EDITION



## IPLA Update

by Mark Tobolski, Principal of Elkhart Memorial High School  
IPLA Alumni Association Vice-President & Winter Conference Committee Chair

IPLA would like to thank everyone who attended the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual IPLA Alumni Association Winter Conference and for helping to make it a huge success.



The committee did a spoof of Dancing with the Stars and chose “Leading with the Stars” as evident with the conference keynotes Dr. Robert Marzano, who spoke about research-based practices for school improvement, and Mr. Clifton Taulbert, who spoke about the power of community and relationships.

The conference theme and content were based upon IPLA’s vision of preparing principals to be instructional leaders that are empowered with effective behaviors, processes and proficiencies for continuous school improvement. Since IPLA has moved toward a standards-based curriculum and data-driven assessment, the Winter Conference Planning Committee carefully chose breakout sessions that advanced the vision and aligned with the curriculum. The Committee also chose breakout presentations so that everyone at all levels could return to their school districts and buildings with programs and practices that they could incorporate for immediate impact. This conference gave Indiana educators options to fit their particular needs as well as to support and validate what may already be in place.

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Conference definitely met the IPLA vision, goals and purpose as evidenced by the numerous accolades given to the staff by many participants. The conference once again proved to be a perfect venue for professional networking, sharing and collegiality which ultimately will help all students become successful. I would like to sum up the conference using the words of many participants, “This was a great conference and will be hard to top next year.” We accept the challenge and hope to see you next year at the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual IPLA Alumni Association Winter Conference at which Dr. Mike Schmoker will keynote.

## The Taiwan Principal Leadership Training Project

During the week of October 15-20, 2007, a delegation of 22 principals and 3 university faculty from Taiwan visited Indiana for professional development, leadership training and international exchange through the Taiwan Principal Leadership Training Project. The project resulted from a 2005 Memorandum of Understanding that the Indiana Department of Education and the Taiwan Ministry of Education signed to promote educational exchanges for principals, teachers and students between Indiana and Taiwan. The Indiana Department of Education’s Office of International Education and the IPLA facilitated the project in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Cultural Division, Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Chicago.

The Taiwanese delegation learned about education in Indiana through various workshops and schools visits. They visited the Center for Inquiry and the Crispus Attucks Medical Magnet School in Indianapolis Public Schools; New Britton Elementary and Fishers High School in Hamilton Southeastern Schools; Southside Elementary and Central Middle School in Columbus; and Franklin Community High School in Franklin Community School Corporation. The delegation was also able to visit various Indiana businesses, organizations and attractions. One of the visit highlights was the evening spent at home with an Indiana host. University professors, Li-hua Chen and Feng-min Wang, recount their experience in Indiana below. What a wonderful time it was!

### FAR BEYOND MY EXPECTATIONS

By Dr. Feng-min Wang

Associate Professor & Director of the Foreign Language Teaching and Training Center Applied English Institute, National Taiwan Ocean University

Far beyond my expectations! I was amazed by the great hospitality we received in Indiana and the high quality of the program offered by the Indiana State Department of Education. Within the six days in Indiana, we were given quite a holistic picture of the educational system from policies to practices at all levels, through presentations and visiting schools and organizations. The dialogues with specialists from different fields in the conference rooms, at meal tables and even parking lots, made my heart deeply touched. I did not see the high boundaries of different cultures and systems, but had a feeling that we all belonged to a world community of education, caring about human values and struggling with the same things.

Among the enjoyable activities, I was excited most about visiting the School for Inquiry. An increasing number of educators and teachers in Taiwan are seeking to create opportunities for inquiry-based learning and teaching at some levels and in some areas of the curriculum. Some of them have started to take their students out to get knowledge in their communities through interviews and observational notes, while others might still rely on reproducing

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texts from textbooks, encyclopedias, newspapers, and journals. The concerns of students' safety and time consumed are two major factors that make teachers hesitate over doing that. No matter what sources we like to use, learning from each other helps teachers develop their own strategies to encourage students to ask questions and to seek answers themselves rather than passively accepting someone else's judgment about what they should know. There is no such school curriculum with the inquiry-oriented practices across all subjects in Taiwan yet. The visit to the Center of Inquiry School in Indianapolis was not only a good memory but also a reminder of brave innovation.

Our trip to Indiana is finished. However, more thinking and dialogues have just begun. With the foundation of good friendship and mutual understanding with the State of Indiana, our conversations will go on with a global view.

## ELABORATE COURSE DESIGN TOUCHES HEARTS

By *Li-hua Chen*

*Professor, Taipei Municipal University of Education*

It was honorable for me to be a delegate of Taiwan Principal Leadership Training Project during Oct.14-19, 2007. I was very impressed by the courses, which were provided by the brilliant and thoughtful officials of Indiana Department of Education. Following are some of the features that touched me most.

### 1. Holistic course design

The project provided a holistic picture of the Indiana public education system, ranging from policies to practices at all levels through various activities such as lectures, discussion, visiting schools and social organizations related to education. All the schools we visited appeared fantastic professionally; for example, the Crispus Attucks School demonstrates a faithful and reflective attitude toward the history about the practices of segregation policy in their museum. The exhibition becomes a valuable heritage of human rights and education. Indianapolis Public Schools' efforts to reform Crispus Attucks to be Medical Magnet School so that urban students may get more and better educational opportunities are wonderful.

### 2. Humanistic and hospitable arrangement

There were some considerate arrangements in the courses. For example, at the main gate of the Center of Inquiry, there was a welcome map which marked the relative location between Indiana and Taiwan! You can image what a brilliant teaching idea it was and it also made every delegate feel at home!

Informal interaction worked to break the ice boundary among people. I enjoyed the talking and sharing at the meal table, in the small group discussion or along the way to a school visit. The visit to the home of an Indiana host was the climax of all the informal contacts. I will always remember the laughing, talking and friendship flowing at the home of Dr. Deb Lecklider who hosted me and three other delegates. I also cannot forget the tears rolling on and overflowing out of our folks' eyes while the delegates were sharing news of their hometown.



**Dr. Feng-min Wang and Li-hua Chen at Conner Prairie**

### 3. Intellectual and professional experience

Visiting the Central Office of Bartholomew County Consolidated Schools was a brand new and vivid experience for me. I was very interested in the budget of the school district, teacher recruitment, principal appointment, and textbook adoption. Even though we did not stay long enough to get to some of these issues, some of the lectures at the meeting room of IDOE were responsive to my curiosity the next day.

I was also very interested in the lecture on ISTEP which are very systematic and elaborate. The past ten years in Taiwan we have initiated a curricula reform. At the moment, it is time to set up an evaluation system to figure out students' progress. I believe Taiwan can learn some lessons from ISTEP.

### 4. Exciting and educational activities.

I was very fond of visiting the Eiteljorg Museum, the Children's Museum, Conner Prairie, and the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. I had good time exploring the exciting activities in the museums, especially experiencing the simulated activities of early history in Conner Prairie. At the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, I almost felt the speed of races, the glory of the winners, and the cheers of the audience. The best part was the surprising gift from Deb Taylor of the media center. At the moment, I totally sensed that Cathy Blitzer, Coordinator of International Education at the Indiana Department of Education, is a genius of public relations. She applied so many resources to enrich our experience in the Training Project.

### 5. Hosts, partners and friends forever

In the final section, I would like to express my grateful heart to the distinguished officials in Indiana Department of Education. Dear Dr. Reed, Phyllis, Kathy, Bill and Susan. You played excellent and perfect roles during our stay. As hosts, you let us feel honored in the welcome reception and every event we had together. As partners, you worked extremely effectively to arrange, to execute and even to evaluate the project! As friends, you take turns to be along with us, helping out all the learning and daily problems. Although back in Taiwan, I do not feel any physical distance among us while I contact Susan by e-mail. We sincerely welcome you all to Taiwan next April. I believe we will have a lot to learn from each other.