

Schools look forward to reimbursement from state

Districts say money will help, even if it isn't new funding

By DEANNA MARTIN
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Switzerland County's small school district has borrowed money the past few years to make ends meet when the state delayed its tuition support payments.



DANIELS

Now Gov. Mitch Daniels has a 2006 agenda that includes paying schools half that money owed to them. The money is not

"It isn't really new money, but it is certainly money that's due to the schools. ... I'm sorry it's not the whole amount, but it's a beginning."

Judy Briganti

Indiana State Teachers Association president, on Gov. Daniels' agenda that includes paying schools half the money that is owed to them

a new appropriation, but it could still help struggling districts like Switzerland, tucked in Indiana's southeast corner.

Superintendent Tracy Caddell said if his district of 1,600 students gets the money soon enough, it could help pay the most recent heating bill, which jumped from \$8,000 for five buildings in December 2004 to \$26,900 this year. It could also mean the district would not have to borrow between \$300,000 and \$500,000 a year to make up

for the payments delayed since 2001.

"We've lived without this money since 2001, so it will allow us to somewhat catch up," Caddell said. "For something like the gas bill, that would be a big help."

The amount varies by school district, but a total of \$156 million will be paid back to schools, Daniels said in his State of the State address last week. The money will come from collections from a recent tax amnesty

period and is half of the \$312 million owed to schools.

Indiana State Teachers Association President Judy Briganti said schools will appreciate the cash flow after years of borrowing money, and paying interest on those loans, to meet expenditures.

"It isn't really new money, but it is certainly money that's due to the schools, so we're pleased about that," Briganti said. "I'm sorry it's not the whole amount, but it's a beginning."

But some of Daniels' critics have said paying off part of the back payments is just a book-keeping measure.

Senate Democrats, who are outnumbered by Republicans 33-17, say Daniels' education agenda is not enough. They are supporting an early education package that would require all

schools to offer full-day kindergarten but have not created a plan to fund the \$138.9 million per year proposal.

Daniels said the state must not introduce new spending until it balances its budget and pays off debts.

"The specific reason we came down so hard to bring balance to the budget is so that we can have the capacity for new spending, and education's at the top of my list," Daniels said Friday. "You can't add new spending when you're flat broke."

Daniels' education agenda this year includes other goals, like expanding joint purchasing among school districts. Many schools already buy supplies, insurance and other items in bulk to save money, but Daniels is pushing legislation that would make it easier to do so.

"Public schools have been pretty proactive in the last few years trying to make ends meet," said Frank Bush, who heads the Indiana School Boards Association. "Where the governor's initiative comes in is encouraging them to become more broad."

Although he did not mention it in his State of the State speech, Daniels also wants to move the statewide ISTEP testing from the fall to the spring. Supporters say it makes more sense to test children after a full school year of instruction, but critics say it will cost too much to move the test.

"It just takes money that we could use for other things and invests it more in testing instead of investing it in children," Briganti said. "If money comes in, fine, but right now we have other priorities."

Are three who helped keep DST alive taking cover?

By MIKE SMITH
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

INDIANAPOLIS

Three lawmakers who opposed statewide daylight-saving time at the end of the last legislative session but previously helped keep measures on it alive through action or inaction have filed bills on time issues this year.

They say it has nothing to do with seeking political cover with their constituents back home, but some Democrats suggest otherwise.

"To me it looks like these legislators are simply covering their tails because they know how hotly contested this has been and they made perhaps some unpopular votes with their decisions last session," said Rep.

ANALYSIS

Dave Crooks, D-Washington.

The path to get statewide observance of daylight-saving time passed was rough and rocky all session long last year, and in the end, it cleared its final hurdle by a single vote in the House. None of that was a surprise, since numerous efforts to pass it had failed for more than three decades.

Through the years, it has been one of the most, if not the most, contentious issues in the General Assembly. Many lawmakers say that's because their constituents are evenly divided on the issue and extremely passionate about it.

But it did pass last session, and three Republicans who voted against it in the end played key roles in advancing it along the way.

It cleared its first step when it was approved on a 6-5 House committee vote. One of the no votes then came from Carolene Mays, D-Indianapolis, who supported its final passage at the end of the session.

But one of the yes votes in committee that day came from Rep. Steve Heim, R-Culver, who opposed daylight-time in the end. If he had voted against it in committee that earlier day, the bill would not have advanced to the full House.

Heim has filed a bill this session that would require a statewide vote in the November elec-

tion asking people if all of Indiana should observe Eastern daylight-time or Central daylight-time.

The results would not be binding on the General Assembly, but Heim said a referendum would be a good way "to see if we can reach a consensus one way or the other."

Is he skating now?

Rep. Jackie Walorski, R-Lakeville, was not present when the initial 6-5 committee vote on daylight time was taken. She said then that she had a scheduling conflict and would vote against it on the floor, which she did.

It would not have gotten to the full House had she shown up to cast her vote against it that day. It got killed along the way, any-

way, but was revived in the Senate, at first in the Senate Rules Committee.

Sen. Allen Paul, R-Richmond, cast the deciding vote to get daylight-saving time to the full Senate. His surveys showed that most of his constituents were against it, and he voted against it in the end. But he, like Heim and Walorski, kept the clock-change alive.

Paul said the issue deserved a vote by the full Senate.

Paul is safe in his district, but House Democrats will surely spend lots of money going after Heim, Walorski and others on time issues.

Hoosiers have been passionate about clocks for decades, and there's no telling what a one-hour change will mean politically.



REHNQUIST



ROBERTS

Judge Roberts slowly leaving his mark on Rehnquist court

By GINA HOLLAND
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

Three months into his tenure on the Supreme Court, Chief Justice John Roberts has yet to emerge fully from the shadow left by his predecessor or hint at any change in the court's direction.

The Supreme Court visitor's guide still features a photo of the late Chief Justice William Rehnquist. And every half-hour, the visitors' theater shows a video that includes a narrative by Rehnquist on how the court works.

Inside the courtroom, Roberts' fresh friendliness sharply contrasts with Rehnquist's brusque style. The new chief justice has an almost boyish enthusiasm in the welcomes he extends to lawyers inducted to the Supreme Court bar at the start of each morning session. The speech is the same, but Roberts delivers it with a smile.

At 50, the court's youngest member is flanked on the bench by 85-year-old Justice John Paul Stevens and 75-year-old Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

"For Roberts, it's brand new," said Duke University law professor Erwin Chemerinsky, who has argued before the Roberts court.

Roberts seems to perch on the edge of his seat. He cracks jokes and smiles at other justices' attempts at humor.

"In some ways, Chief Justice Roberts is more open," said Viet Dinh, a Georgetown Law School professor and former Supreme Court clerk. "He has a more welcoming countenance. He's younger. He smiles more."

Rehnquist, who was on the court 33 years before his death last fall, "was more of an interested spectator and overall umpire rather than a participant most times," Dinh said.

Before joining the bench as an appeals court judge in 2003, Roberts was a veteran Supreme Court lawyer and had argued 39 times before the justices. He first came to the Supreme Court after graduating from Harvard Law School to clerk for Rehnquist.

Rehnquist was known for getting his opinions done speedily, even while battling cancer. As chief justice, Roberts' pace so far has been average.

Justices were used to being chided by Rehnquist when they asked too many lengthy or off-the-point questions. Roberts does not cut off questioning. He often interrupts lawyers during their closing rebuttals with more questions, something Rehnquist did not like.

"He might be more of a lawyer's judge than Rehnquist was," said A.E. Dick Howard, a Supreme Court expert.

Township assessors opposing Daniels plan

The Associated Press

BLOOMINGTON

If Gov. Mitch Daniels has his way, this week's meeting of Indiana's township assessors might be one of the last.

Assessors for the state's counties and townships are set to meet today through Friday in Indianapolis. But Daniels wants to eliminate township assessors, turning over their duties to county assessors.

The proposal was part of the local government makeover he announced during his State of the State speech last week.

The idea is bound to draw pro-

tests from township officials who not only oppose the change but question its necessity.

"(Daniels and lawmakers are) takin' on a pretty big bear," Bloomington Township Assessor James Brinegar said.

Daniels' plan eliminates township assessors and removes tax assessment duties from township trustees who currently perform them. Instead, county assessors would handle all tax assessments, and everyone doing assessments would have to be certified.

Daniels said last week that many assessment workers appeared to have little training. But Thelma Kelley Jeffries, trustee-assessor for

Clear Creek Township in Monroe County, said she and her part-time deputy both are already certified.

So is Brinegar.

A state law already has been passed requiring township assessors and trustee-assessors elected in 2006 to be certified within a year of taking office and obtain a higher level of certification by 2010.

"The problems they are talking about will take care of themselves," Jeffries said.

Daniels' plan has support from the Indiana Association of Counties, the state association of county commissioners, the Indiana Association of Cities and Towns and the Indiana Association of Realtors.

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