

## From the Desk of the Chancellor

### Back to school?

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*by Charles R. Bantz*

For those of us who grew up thinking school started after or just before Labor Day, yesterday's headline in the Indy Star that the fall term of K-12 districts were starting as soon as this week was a reminder of how much education has changed over the decades.

The Labor Day start reflected a country dominated by agriculture. Families needed children to help harvest the wheat before going back to school. There was even a belief in Minnesota that the delay was so children would be available to staff family resorts (as well as go on vacation to those resorts). But whatever the story then -- times have changed.

They have changed because we know how important it is to keep children learning through the summer. Research shows significant learning loss occurs over long breaks. Thus having schedules that provide more school days and brief vacation breaks, should reduce learning loss.

I highlight this focus on continuing learning because today I took the opportunity to remind colleagues across the Indianapolis community how important it is to build a culture of life-long learning. Each of us has daily opportunities to learn, which can be combined in a sustained commitment to learning -- whether a skill, trade, discipline, or profession; learning leads to amazing achievements of humans.

Think of someone who learned to read and sustained that commitment to learning through reading, or someone who learned to write and sustained that commitment to learning through writing. Imagine the contributions such individuals can make!

So as those K-12 students begin to return to school, please encourage each of them to keep learning by asking them what they're learning on a daily basis. And don't accept "nothing" as an answer.

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