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ISBA WEEK 12 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dear ISBA Members:

Here is your Week 12 Legislative Update with the essential information you need to know about the status of the budget session of the Indiana General Assembly. Bills must pass out of committee in the second chamber by April 10, followed by a third reading vote on/or before April 15, 2025, to remain active this session. Now, (mercifully) just four and one-half weeks to go – please keep advocating for kids!

ISBA Bill Tracking List

The updated ISBA Tracking List is available [HERE](#).

ISBA "Top 3 Things to Know" Weekly Video Update

Click [HERE](#) to watch the Week 12 video update.

Key Legislation on the Docket This Week:

[SB 373](#) **Department of Education** (Author: Sen. Jeff Raatz; Sponsor: Rep. Bob Behning) – The House Education Committee heard testimony on Wednesday on this IDOE program administration and oversight bill. ISBA has only been monitoring this

legislation this session. However, a **significant amendment** was introduced by Chairman Behning **that would create a centralized school facilities pilot program and a student transportation pilot program and plans**. School corporations and charter schools can opt into the centralized school facilities pilot program by application to the IDOE. For the student transportation pilot program, all school systems, including accredited non-public schools, can participate in the pilot program. Once approved, each pilot program would have a “local board” established to govern the program. Each participating unit would have a representative appointed to the local board. These local boards would have taxing authority and control over all local property taxes levied by school corporations. Furthermore, the local boards would be granted “the authority to approve or deny any property tax levy approved by the governing body of the applicable school corporation.” Also, ownership of all school facility and bus assets would transfer to the local board after the three year pilot concludes and the partner program becomes permanent. Ultimately, any school corporation involved in these pilot programs would lose control of the Operations Fund and Debt Service Fund levies. Lastly, a school corporation needing to pursue an operations referendum for Education Fund revenue would have to seek approval of either or both local boards if the school corporation is a partner in either or both pilot program. The proposal is based on two IDOE concept papers that were issued last fall that included no research, quantitative analysis, or cost benefit analysis, and were funded by the Mind Trust. The bill was held in committee for possible further amendments and a vote next week.

ISBA testified (also on behalf of IASBO and IUSA) against this amendment, saying this tips the scales against a level playing field for which to compete to the disadvantage of school districts. The Indiana Small and Rural Schools Association also testified in opposition to the amendment, while IAPSS testified as neutral. ISBA opposes the proposal as it creates a duplicative, bureaucratic layer of governance while removing local control from elected school boards. Instead, the newly established local boards will include voting representatives of many small charter and private schools that are not elected, and who may have an economic interest in the business operations of their school. We question whether this is good fiscal stewardship of taxpayer dollars. Please join ISBA, IASBO, IUSA, and ISRSA in opposing this amendment by contacting your area state representative with any concerns.

HB 1002 Various Education Matters (Author: Rep. Bob Behning; Sponsor: Sen. Jeff Raatz) – The Senate Education and Career Development Committee passed this deregulation bill out of committee with several amendments. Some of the amendments include (1) allowing school corporations to charge parents for fees that

are supplies and materials that do not fall within the definition of curricular materials (2) requiring schools to have operational automated external defibrillators at certain events and (3) repealing several statutes referring to social, emotional, and behavioral plans/instruction and trauma informed classroom instruction curriculum in teacher preparation programs. The bill has been recommitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

HB 1134 Public Meetings (Author: Rep. Ben Smaltz; Sponsor: Sen. Jim Buck) – The Senate Local Government Committee heard testimony on this bill that adds to the list of permissible executive sessions (1) discussion of either employee health care options with respect to special exceptions for coverage or employee handbook changes (2) to review negotiations on the performance of publicly bid contracts when public knowledge regarding the review would likely cause an increase in costs and (3) to discuss soliciting proposals for the purpose of awarding contracts for goods or services when proprietary data or trade secrets are in the bid proposal and public knowledge of the discussion might harm the bidders. There was also language in the bill allowing a person to file a complaint if there was a technology failure in the live transmission of a public meeting, but the Committee approved an amendment to delete the language. The bill passed out of the Committee unanimously and is eligible for second reading on the floor of the Senate.

SB 366 Education Matters (Author: Sen. Linda Rogers; Sponsor: Rep. Behning) – The House Education Committee heard testimony on this deregulation bill on Wednesday. ISBA testified in support of the language in the bill that (1) deletes allowing a student to transfer because the student can be better accommodated at another school corporation (2) repeals the requirement for a superintendent to discuss completed staff performance evaluation plans with teachers before presenting the report to the school board and (3) repeals the requirement to appoint a certain percentage of teachers to specific committees. The Committee will vote on the bill next week.

Contact Your Area Legislators During Session

To find your legislators visit [HERE](#). Once you know who your senator and representative are, you can use a legislative directory maintained by ISBA and available [HERE](#) to begin advocating.

Thank you for your participation in the ISBA Legislative Action Network. Let's stand united in 2025 to put children first and support sound K-12 education policy in Indiana!

Sincerely,

Terry Spradlin

Terry Spradlin

Executive Director

Indiana School Boards Association

One North Capitol Avenue, Suite 1215

Indianapolis, IN 46204-2225

317-639-3588



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