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ISBA WEEK 3 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dear ISBA Members:

Here is your Week 3 Legislative Update with the essential information you need to know about the status of the budget session of the Indiana General Assembly.

ISBA Bill Tracking List

A total of 1,232 bills have been introduced, 689 House bills and 543 Senate bills. There are presently 191 bills are on the ISBA Tracking List [HERE](#).

ISBA "Top 3 Things to Know" Weekly Video Update

Click [HERE](#) to watch the Week 3 video update.

7th Annual ISBA State House Day – PLEASE RSVP Today!

Nothing is more powerful than ISBA members in action via grassroots advocacy empowered by the ISBA Legislative Action Network! The 7th Annual State House Day will be held on February 18, 2025, at the Indianapolis Downtown Hyatt Regency. This event is a prime opportunity for you to have firsthand engagement with your area legislators. In addition to hearing from caucus leaders and education committee

leaders during two excellent panel discussions, and a staff bill briefing, we encourage you to invite your area legislators to join you for conversation during the noon luncheon portion of the event. As a reminder, we encourage your school board president and board legislative liaison, or some combination of two board member representatives of your board, to attend the complimentary event and receive a \$35 stipend for parking and mileage. Please RSVP to attend the event [HERE](#).

Your Voice is Needed!

As you have read in the ISBA Weekly Legislative Updates, two bills have been filed to move school board races to partisan elections, SB 287, and HB 1230. We anticipate that one or both bills may receive a hearing in the next 7-10 days in the respective committees of which the bills were assigned.

SB 287 School Board Matters (Author: Senator Byrne; Co-Author: Senator Doriot) – Requires candidates for school board offices to be nominated in the same manner as candidates for all other elected offices are nominated, including a primary election and party affiliation identification on the ballot. The bill also modifies the annual amount that the governing body of a school corporation may pay a member of the governing body from \$2,000 (under current law) to an amount not to exceed 10% of the lowest starting salary of a teacher employed by the school corporation.

Please reach out immediately to your state senator and members of the Senate Elections Committee to urge them to vote “NO” on SB 287.

Senate Elections

Sen. Mike Gaskill (Chairperson): mike.gaskill@iga.in.gov

Sen. Greg Walker: greg.walker@iga.in.gov

Sen. Stacey Donato: stacey.donato@iga.in.gov

Sen. Greg Goode: greg.goode@iga.in.gov

Sen. Tyler Johnson: tyler.johnson@iga.in.gov

Sen. Linda Rogers: linda.rogers@iga.in.gov

Sen. Daryl Schmitt: daryl.schmitt@iga.in.gov

Sen. J.D. Ford: jd.ford@iga.in.gov

Sen. Mark Spencer: mark.spencer@iga.in.gov

HB 1230 School Board Elections (Author: Rep. J.D. Prescott; Co-Authors: Reps. Doug Miller, Robert Heaton, and Michelle Davis). This bill provides that for school board offices, each candidate's affiliation with a political party or status as an independent candidate must be stated on the general election ballot but does not add a primary election or address school board member compensation.

Please reach out now with your state representative to urge them to vote “NO” on HB 1230. Also, please consider communication asking for a “NO” vote from members of the House Elections & Apportionment Committee:

House Elections and Apportionment

Rep. Timothy Wesco (Chairperson): h21@iga.in.gov

Rep. Zach Payne: h66@iga.in.gov

Rep. Kendell Culp: h16@iga.in.gov

Rep. Ethan Lawson: h53@iga.in.gov

Rep. Kyle Pierce: h36@iga.in.gov

Rep. J.D. Prescott: h33@iga.in.gov

Rep. Jim Pressel: h20@iga.in.gov

Rep. Ben Smaltz: h52@iga.in.gov

Rep. Tim Yocum: Tim.R.Yocum@gmail.com

Rep. Carolyn Jackson: h1@iga.in.gov

Rep. Pat Boy: h9@iga.in.gov

Rep. Sue Errington: errington@comcast.net

Rep. Cherrish Pryor: h94@iga.in.gov

Share the following that a “NO” vote is a vote to:

- Enable dedicated public servants working for the federal government or our court system to continue service on their boards (this bill would invoke the Hatch Act and the Indiana Code of Judicial Conduct for these public servants prohibiting their continued service)
- Preserve local focus on students and prioritizing community needs. Requiring political party affiliation for school board candidates injects unnecessary division and fragmentation in the decision-making process occurring in the boardroom
- Preserve local control and empower voters to have a more highly qualified pool of candidates to choose from based on each candidate’s credentials. A partisan label will lead to voter apathy and uninformed voting about the candidates’ experience or educational vision
- Adding a primary election and making school board races a lengthy and costly process will further narrow the pool of qualified candidates for an office that is minimally paid (maximum of \$2,000 annually)

You can use these [talking points](#) to help further customize your messaging.

Other Bills of Note:

SB 146 Teacher Compensation (Author: Senator Rogers; Second Author: Senator Raatz) – The Senate Education and Career Development Committee amended this bill by deleting language that would have allowed a school employee to elect to participate in the state health insurance program under certain conditions. The amended language now requires the Department of Education to study the feasibility and cost of allowing school employees to exercise such an option. There were no amendments to the teacher compensation provisions of the bill. The amended bill passed out of the Committee unanimously and has been reassigned to Senate Appropriations.

SB 366 Education Matters (Author: Senator Rogers) – The bill has several provisions including giving the Department of Education oversight responsibilities of prekindergarten child care programs in public schools, requiring the Secretary of Education to prepare a report on the feasibility of offering school bus driver safety education training regionally and making recommendations to address the school bus driver shortage, and creating a school improvement task force to make recommendations for aid to schools that are consistently failing. The bill also includes language to repeal statutes that limit the amount of state tuition support that may be spent on remediation programs, require the superintendent to discuss the staff performance evaluation plan with teachers before presenting the plan to the school board, and require a percentage of teachers to serve on certain committees. ISBA testified in support of the deregulation provisions of the bill. The Senate Education and Career Development Committee will vote on the bill next week.

SB 482 Absenteeism (Author: Senator Donato; Co-Author: Senator Rogers) – Building on Senate Enrolled Act 282, Senator Donato's previous legislation on chronic absenteeism, this bill introduces a definition of "chronically absent" as missing ten percent (10%) or more of a school year for any reason—a definition not previously included in the Indiana Code. It also requires the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) to develop a framework for categorizing absences as excused or unexcused, allows for an intervention meeting before filing an affidavit, and extends the timeline for holding an attendance conference from five instructional days to 10. ISBA testified in favor of this bill before the Senate Education and Career Development Committee on Wednesday. The bill has garnered support from numerous organizations, including the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, Indiana Small and Rural Schools Association, Indiana Association of School Principals, Indiana State Teachers Association, Communities in Schools of Indiana, and Indiana Association of Home Educators. Senator Donato has also offered to work with the Indiana Association of School Principals to refine the language in Section 10, which

prohibits the expulsion of students solely for absenteeism. An amendment to this section is anticipated. The Committee is scheduled to vote on the bill next week.

[HB 1002](#) Various Education Matters (Author: Representative Behning) – The House Education Committee considered and approved a substantial amendment (#19) to this “education deregulation” bill that reflects requests from ISBA and other organizations. Click [HERE](#) to see the digest of this amendment. The bill passed out of committee as amended by a 7-4 vote. The introduced version of the bill included 217 sections and covered 135 pages to remove and repeal various education statutes and expired education provisions found in Indiana Code Title 20. This bill is a work in progress, but ISBA supports it as it helps return decision making and local control to school districts under Home Rule powers. An updated version of the bill that reflects the amendment will be available early next week after the committee report has been adopted on the floor of the House of Representatives on Monday.

[HB 1201](#) Education Matters (Author: Representative Behning) -- The House Education Committee considered and approved [Amendment #3](#) that includes language requested by ISBA. The bill passed out the committee as amended by a 11-0 vote. The bill now adds a statutory definition of chronic absenteeism. It allows a prosecuting attorney to conduct a meeting, collaborate, and make reasonable efforts to secure appropriate support services for a child and the child's family before filing an affidavit regarding a violation of compulsory school attendance requirements. Requires the Indiana Department of Education to do the following: (1) Establish a categorization framework to distinguish between excused and unexcused absences based on the reason for the absence. (2) Collect certain information regarding absences from school corporations and charter schools. (3) Prepare and post a report regarding the information on the Department's website. Provides that the absence policy adopted by the governing body of a school corporation must provide for the categorization of excused and unexcused absences in accordance with the categorization framework established by the Department and requires a public school to hold an attendance conference not later than 10 instructional days (instead of five instructional days) after the student's fifth absence. ISBA supports HB 1201.

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

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