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## **ISBA WEEK 5 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

Dear ISBA Members:

Here is your Week 5 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**

There are presently 184 bills on the ISBA Tracking List [HERE](#). Don't forget that the Tracking List includes the last three actions on the bills, so you will know where each bill stands in the bill process.

### **ISBA "Top 3 Things to Know" Weekly Video Update**

Click [HERE](#) to watch the Week 5 video update.

### **Your Voice is Still Needed on SB 287 and HB 1230!**

House Bill 1230 is anticipated to be scheduled for a hearing in the House Elections & Apportionment Committee on Wednesday, February 12, 10:30 a.m., in Room 156-B of the State House. ISBA is calling on school board members to attend the hearing to testify in opposition to the bill. Citizens will have 2-3 minutes (TBA by the committee

chair) to offer testimony on the bill. If you have an interest and availability in helping, please email me at: [tspradlin@isba-ind.org](mailto:tspradlin@isba-ind.org) and I will send you more details to assist you in planning your trip to Indy. Here is the bill summary:

**HB 1230 School Board Elections** (Author: Representative Prescott) – 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.

**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. This bill was heard on Monday in the Senate Elections Committee. ISBA was well represented by 14 school board members from across the state. These school board members were respectful, insightful, and impactful with the testimony that they provided. A total of 25 individuals spoke in opposition to the bill and only 1 person representing an out-of-state organization spoke in support of the bill. The bill was held for a vote that will now occur on Monday, February 10, 9:30 a.m. Please continue to communicate with your state senator this weekend to oppose the bill.

### **Other Bills of Note:**

**HB 1001 State Budget** (Author: Reps. Thompson, Porter, Snow) – This initial version of the bill is considered the governor's budget. It reflects agency requests, including those from the Indiana Department of Education. The K-12 education funding provisions can be found on pages 57-64. There is largely straight-lined funding of categorical grants, and it provides a tuition support formula increase for K-12 public schools of approximately 1.3% per year in the next biennium. Public testimony was allowed on the state budget on Thursday in the Ways & Means Committee and about 100 people representing various groups, organizations, and associations testified. Both ISBA and IASBO testified in support of additional increases in the tuition support formula to get to a percentage that meets or exceeds inflation. In addition, ISBA called for additional funding for ELL students, summer school reimbursement, the secured schools safety grant, and expansion of the On My Way Pre-K program. ISBA anticipates a new version of the budget to be voted on by this committee in the next 10 days.

**HB 1285 Special Education** (Author: Representative Cash) – This bill was heard in the House Education Committee on Wednesday. It requires schools to have behavioral interventionists (persons trained in nonviolent crisis intervention training) in each school building and to install electronic recording equipment in classrooms of students with severe disabilities, seclusion areas, sensory rooms, and time-out areas. The bill also creates a special education classroom grant program to assist schools in complying with the mandates of the bill. ISBA testified in opposition to the bill, expressing concern about the fiscal impact of the mandates. There was confusion about the behavioral interventionist language and the author expressed that there would be an amendment to clarify her intent. The bill was held and will be voted on next week.

**HB 1681 Local Public Questions** (Author: Representative Wesco) – Provides that a local public question or referendum may be placed on the ballot only at a general election. Provides that: (1) a state public question; or (2) an election of delegates to a convention to consider ratifying an amendment to the United States Constitution; may be placed on the ballot only at a general election. This bill was heard in the House Elections and Apportionment Committee on Wednesday. ISBA testified in opposition to the bill, as well as Scott Wyndham, superintendent of Avon Community Schools, and a representative of the AIA Indiana from Schmidt Associates. The Secretary of State's Office testified in support of the bill arguing that county clerks struggle with the cost and staffing burden of referenda held in a special election, municipal elections, and primaries. The bill passed 7-2. Please email or call your state representative to oppose this bill to maintain local control and keep “all the tools in the toolbox” of governing bodies to address instructional, operational, and facility issues when they arise.

**SB 366 Education Matters** (Author: Senator Rogers) – The Senate Education and Career Development Committee adopted two amendments on Wednesday to the introduced bill. The first amendment removed proposed language creating a school improvement task force to discuss and make recommendations to aid failing schools, repealed current law regarding allowing students to transfer when they can be better accommodated, repealed current provisions on early childhood and elementary school teacher content area licensing and endorsements, repealed current law on advancements from the common school fund for school building construction, and charged the early learning advisory committee with studying how schools can access on my way pre-k program funding outside of the federal program. The second amendment removed the proposed repeal of current law that limits the amount of money schools may spend on remediation programs. The bill passed out of committee by a vote of 9-4 and is eligible for a second reading by the Senate.

**SB 523 School Chaplains** (Author: Senator S. Donato; Co-Author: Senator Raatz) – Permits a principal or superintendent of a public school, including a charter school, to employ or approve a school chaplain as a volunteer if certain qualifications are met. The bill outlines credential requirements for education and experience for school chaplains. A school chaplain may provide secular support to students and staff, as well as nonsecular support, but only with permission from the student (if emancipated), the employee, or a parent and the student (if unemancipated). Additionally, the bill establishes that communications between students and chaplains are privileged and confidential, with certain exceptions, such as situations involving self-harm or harm to others must be reported to the school counselor. This provision ensures that chaplains serve as an additional resource while maintaining student safety. ISBA supports this bill because it upholds local control, allowing schools to determine whether a chaplain would be beneficial for their community. The bill provides schools with an additional resource to support students and staff, that can be helpful in the aftermath of crisis situations for example. Importantly, chaplains will not replace school counselors but will supplement existing support systems. ISBA testified in favor of this bill before the Senate Education and Career Development Committee on Wednesday. The bill passed the committee by a vote of 9-4 and now moves to the Senate floor for second and third reading deliberation.

### **7th Annual ISBA State House Day – One Week Left to RSVP!**

Nothing is more powerful than ISBA members in action via grassroots advocacy empowered by the ISBA Legislative Action Network! The 7<sup>th</sup> 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](#). **\*If you plan to attend, please extend a personal note of invitation to your state senator and representative to join you during legislative luncheon at noon in the Cosmopolitan AB Ballroom (level 3). They can RSVP to Kyrsten Horton at: [khorton@isba-ind.org](mailto:khorton@isba-ind.org)**

### **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**

Executive Director

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