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ISBA WEEK 6 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dear ISBA Members:

Here is your Week 6 Legislative Update with the essential information you need to know about the status of the budget session of the Indiana General Assembly. The upcoming week is an important one with the third reading deadline on bills in the house of origin occurring on Thursday, February 20. Bills that have not been voted on with a majority affirmative third reading vote by this deadline are dead for the session.

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 6 video update.

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

Senate Bill 287 and House Bill 1230 will be on the third reading calendar on Monday and Tuesday, respectively. ISBA sent Call-to-Action Alert #3 this morning at 8 a.m.

with an urgent message for action.

[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 may be stated on the general election ballot.

[SB 287](#) School Board Matters (Author: Senator Byrne) – 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.

Other Bills of Note:

[SB 1](#) Property Tax Relief (Author: Senators Holdman, Gartin, and Baldwin) – The Senate Tax & Fiscal Policy Committee amended SB 1 with a 93-page amendment on Tuesday and then voted the bill out of committee by a 10-3 vote. This bill has significant impact on levy dollars for local units of government, including school corporations. The amendment adds restrictive language found in the introduced versions of SB 8 (referenda) and SB 9 (MLGQ). Please speak with your superintendent and CFO for an analysis of the impact of SB 1 on your school corporation. A spreadsheet with the estimated losses or gains by school corporations is linked [HERE](#).

The provisions of the amendment that have negative impact to the financial management tools available to school corporations include changes to the percentage cap used to determine the maximum levy growth quotient (MLGQ) to equal: (1) 0% in 2026; (2) 1% in 2027; and (3) 2% in 2028. Beginning with property taxes first due and payable in 2029, amends the calculation of the MLGQ to provide a new methodology. Specifies that the MLGQ calculation is determined for the county and each civil taxing unit within the county based on specified criteria. Provides the calculation of the MLGQ for civil taxing units with territory in more than one county. The amended bill now restricts school referendums to be posed only in the general election every two years. Amends the ballot language for controlled project, school operating, and school public safety referendums. Provides that a school corporation may not adopt a resolution to place a controlled project referendum on the ballot during the second calendar year after the final calendar year in which a previously approved controlled project referendum levy is imposed. Places restrictions on the issuance of certain general obligation bonds at the expiration of general obligation bonds, the qualified

political subdivision must wait two years from that date before the qualified political subdivision may issue new general obligation bonds. Phases out the authority for the Department of Local Government Finance to permit an excess tax levy that is based on assessed value growth, related to a revenue shortfall, school transportation costs, and other circumstances.

It will be incumbent for a unified message from school officials to legislators to note the fiscal impact on your school district while asking for further amendments to the bill to lessen the severity of levy losses to your Operations Fund and Debt Service Fund.

HB 1285 Special Education (Authors: Rep. Becky Cash, Rep. Michelle Davis, and Rep. Craig Haggard) – The House Education Committee amended this bill on Wednesday by removing the requirement for schools to install cameras in certain special education classrooms and time-out and seclusion areas. The bill now requires school corporations to ensure that at least one employee in each school building has obtained nonviolent crisis intervention training and is available to respond to instances where de-escalation is needed and when restraint, seclusion, or time-out avenues are used. The bill prohibits a school corporation from preventing a parent from recording a case conference committee meeting and prohibits school officials from removing the property of a student who dies, transfers, drops out, or otherwise withdraws without providing the parent with the opportunity to collect the student's belongings. The bill passed out of the Committee 13-0 and is eligible for second reading on the House floor.

HB 1500 Teacher Appreciation Grants (Authors: Rep. Bob Behning, Rep. Julie McGuire, Rep. Sheila Klinker, and Rep. Hunter Smith) – The amended version of this bill repeals the current teacher appreciation grant program and replaces it with one wherein schools will have to apply for the grant and the Department of Education will administer the program. To be eligible for a stipend, a teacher will have to meet the criteria for a “recognized” designation, an “exemplary” designation, or a “master” designation or serve as the teacher of record or teacher of service in a high need or geographic shortage area as determined by the Department. The amount of the stipend will differ depending on the eligibility of the teacher. The stipend will be given to the teacher for two consecutive years and thereafter must be added to the base salary of the teacher. The bill also repeals the requirement to rate teachers as highly effective, effective, needs improvement, or ineffective and all other statutory references to those categories. The bill passed out of the House Education Committee by a vote of 10-3 and is eligible for second reading on the House floor.

[HB 1539](#) Education Matters (Authors: Rep. Vern Smith, Rep. Bob Behning, and Rep. Becky Cash) – The introduced version of this bill expanded the definition of bullying to include “acts that are repeated, have the potential to be repeated, or occur one time to a degree of severity.” The bill was amended to remove “acts that have the potential to be repeated” from the definition and to add language on the transfer of either the victim or the alleged perpetrator to another school within the school corporation as a result of the bullying. The House Education Committee agreed to an additional amendment that would establish timelines and procedures for school administrators to follow in cases where a student accuses an employee of misconduct. ISBA testified against the bill. It passed out of the Committee by a 11-0 vote and is eligible for second reading on the House floor.

7th Annual ISBA State House Day on Tuesday

Thank you to the nearly 150 school board members who are registered for the 7th Annual ISBA State House Day on Tuesday, February 18. We have nearly 50 legislators registered for the luncheon. Nearly one-third of the legislature intends to be with us to hear from you! This will be an impactful day for advocacy for model school board governance and K-12 public education.

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,



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