



e-Dition

Good News for K-12 Public Education? It's a Matter of Perception

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Thank you to the more than 1,000 ISBA school board members, superintendents, and service members that have attended the Spring Regional Meetings. Attendance was high, but due to scheduling conflicts some of you were unable to attend these meetings. We discussed the outcome of the 2019 budget session of the Indiana General Assembly and the feedback from membership is that it was a “so-so” session for K-12 public education. I agree with that perspective in that while the budget was favorable to K-12 public education, the legislature passed 52 new laws regulating the delivery of public education. That's excessive! Here are my full perspectives that were shared in an op-ed column published in many newspapers around the state.

Every two years, the Indiana General Assembly has the arduous, but critical task of crafting a state budget and deciding how much money gets invested in K-12 education. We at the Indiana School Boards Association are at the forefront of the fight to get our schools the strongest level of funding possible to support more than 1 million Hoosier public school students. Funding for the K-12 education system in Indiana represents 50 percent of state government's two-year budget of \$34 billion.

The ISBA joined with other K-12 education associations to stand with government leaders, including Governor Eric Holcomb, Speaker of the House Brian Bosma, and Senate President Pro Tempore Rod Bray, on April 23, to announce funding increases of \$763 million for

the next two years. While we will always be supportive of additional funding for teachers, classrooms, and high-quality instruction, we did fully support this budget. Why?

Prior to the beginning of the 2019 legislative session, the ISBA announced its legislative priorities, with adequate increases for public education as its top priority. During the legislative session we worked the school administrator groups to form a coalition to develop strategies and priorities regarding school funding. As a result of working together and finding common ground with the coalition, every one of the coalition's 10 priorities presented to legislative leaders is embedded in the state budget. ISBA's priorities included a 2.5 percent increase tuition support increase, a state school safety grant, and increases in funding of English Language Learning programs. Altogether, the budget increases total 4.5 percent annually – a substantial and meaningful funding increase for K-12 public education. The final K-12 education budget allotment of \$14.8 billion represents a historic funding level and the highest percentage increase since the Great Recession and the changes to funding of public education made in 2009.

The ISBA, however, continues to have some reservations with the prolific nature of the General Assembly to pass scores of new laws (52 this session) that impinge on local control of primary and secondary education. The ISBA's position remains that the unique learning needs of children are best addressed

through local control by educators and the locally-elected school board working with parents, students, and the broader community of which they represent. The legislature would do well to resist the temptation to demand a “top down” approach to governing our schools and school boards.

While the Spring Regional Meetings have concluded, ISBA will have a busy June with three seminars or webinars on the calendar. Please see the list of upcoming events on page 3. In addition, the dates have been set for the 2019 ISBA-IAPSS Fall Conference to occur on September 30 – October 1. Please save these dates on your calendar! As always, we are here to serve you, so please do not hesitate to reach out to us by phone or email with any questions that you have about board governance.

Enjoy this new issue of e-Dition!

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