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Governor Holcomb Leads on School Safety Issues

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Given what appears to be an increasing prevalence of school security threat issues across the U.S., enhancing school safety policies, procedures, and facilities have taken on enhanced significance. ISBA commends Governor Eric Holcomb and state agency leaders for their recent flurry of actions to address this elevated priority. Here is a list of timely updates in this policy area for board members to be aware of as you embark on another school year.

Governor's Taskforce on School Safety Recommendations

This spring, Governor Holcomb assembled a working group tasked with conducting research on school safety and presenting recommendations to inform his administration in preparation for the 2019 budget session. The taskforce collected data and more than 400 stakeholder responses to assemble 18 recommendations organized into three categories: enhanced mental health services; safety equipment, technology, and training; and policy or legislative considerations. These recommendations ([link](#)) were issued publicly on August 4, 2018. Governor Holcomb and the taskforce members are to be commended for their thorough work and the sound recommendations offered. ISBA supports the recommendations of the report, especially those

pertaining to expanding resources for professional mental health support services for students.

Handheld Metal Detectors

In July, Governor Holcomb announced a program to offer free handheld metal detectors (1 per 250 students) to any school or school corporation upon request. As a result, a total of 94% of school corporations requested the devices and more than 3,200 devices were provided. Julie Slavens, ISBA Staff Attorney, issued guidance from ISBA on policies and procedures for school boards and administrators to consider in use of the devices. See her guidance correspondence sent on July 18 here: ([MetalDetectorSearches2018](#))

IDOE School Safety Audits

As a result of the school safety legislation passed earlier this year (HEA 1230), the Indiana Department of Education is required to conduct school safety audits of every school in the state this school year. The IDOE is in the process of selecting and training a partner contractor(s) to help fulfill this requirement. Audits should begin in October and must be completed by March 31, 2019. More information and guidance should be coming soon from IDOE; however, they have posted a "HEA 1230 School Safety Audit" checklist under "Site Resources" as at: (<https://www.doe.in.gov/safety>)

Fire Marshall Guidance to Schools for Unplanned Fire Alarms

Another provision of HEA 1230 directed the State Fire Marshal to provide written guidance to school administrators, teachers, and students regarding evacuation options available during an unplanned fire alarm. The law and guidance speaks to unplanned fire alarm (pulls) and the sequence leading to the evacuation of classrooms that may include a 3-minute delay and the temporary barricading of doors. These guidelines and additional options/considerations can be found at: (www.in.gov/dhs/unplannedfirealarms.htm)

Federal Commission on School Safety

The NSBA conducted a "listening session" on school safety with U.S. DOE Deputy Secretary Mick Zais that ISBA President Kim Woodward and I attended during the Summer Leadership Seminar on August 17. Dr. Zais received verbal and written commentary and recommendations from several state school boards associations, including ISBA, to share with the Federal Commission on School Safety. Please see my letter with recommendations to Dr. Zais here: ([letter](#))