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Major Issues Confronting Indiana School Corporations

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Local Control Prevails in the IN-CLASS COVID-19 Health and Safety Re-entry Guide

The June 5th issuance by the Indiana Department of Education of the guide, “Indiana’s Considerations for Learning and Safe Schools (IN-CLASS): COVID-19 Health and Safety Re-entry Guidance” has prompted many questions from school board members and administrators. In this issue of e-Dition, Julie Slavens, Senior Counsel/Director of Policy Services, provides guidance on calculating seat time for virtual learning and in-classroom instruction for various ADM and instructional time (reporting) requirements.

We are appreciative of the local control this guidance provides. ISBA agrees with Dr. Jennifer McCormick, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, that prevalence of the coronavirus has varied significantly from county to county and regions of the state, and thus, flexibility is necessary.

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We express our gratitude to the IDOE Staff, who worked with the Governor's Office and officials from FSSA and the Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) in developing the guidance.

As school leaders you are being asked to work cohesively as a board-superintendent team to communicate with authorities having jurisdiction, primarily the county or local health department, and refer to ISDH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, to develop your school corporation's re-opening plans for the 2020-2021 School Year. Schools are permitted to reopen on July 1, and there is no indication that the state will intervene to dictate a mandatory start date to the school year. You must move forward with making plans to open schools as previously determined in your adopted school-year calendar, or, act as soon as possible to alter the calendar and notify parents and students of any change.

Developing, adopting, and implementing a school re-opening plan will be hard work and many difficult decisions are before you to make. ISBA will continue to issue weekly guidance on our Coronavirus Resources page, including FAQs and model resolutions, which can be found [HERE](#). We concur with the plan recommendation that relevant stakeholders and local legal counsel should also be consulted to determine which considerations are feasible and the most appropriate way to proceed.

Please let us know how we can continue to support your school board as you move forward with these tremendous endeavors. We will respond to your request for informational resources and guidance as quickly as possible. Finally, ISBA will continue to advocate for funding support to address students' learning needs and the additional costs of meeting the IN-CLASS health and safety guidelines.

The Need to Re-examine Equity and Equality in K-12 Education

ISBA issued a statement on civil rights and equality in education on Thursday, June 4, and the full statement can be viewed [HERE](#).

Thank you to the school board members and school administrators who have replied with feedback and recommendations on equity and equality issues that need addressed in our public education system. As mentioned in the statement, ISBA is reflecting on how we as a statewide association – made up of 289 school boards and nearly 1,700 school board members – can optimally support the success of ALL Indiana students by using our authority and influence to eliminate inequities and inequalities where they exist within our schools and school communities. Each Hoosier child unequivocally deserves equal and equitable opportunities to succeed during and after their K-12 education experience. Please share with us via email or letter how we can best support you in your role as school board members to achieve these desired outcomes.

School Referenda Results

Congratulations to the 13 school corporations that passed a total of 16 referenda during the 2020 primary election held officially on June 2 (though more than 600,000 Hoosiers voted via absentee ballot this time). This favorable outcome, an 89% passage rate with just two proposals defeated, was phenomenal and surpassed expectation in face of the difficult economic circumstances prompted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The leadership, committee members, and volunteers of the referendum campaigns who contributed to these highly successful outcomes are to be commended for the tremendous efforts demonstrated. ISBA is planning a summer webinar that will spotlight the effective strategies and lessons learned from these referenda initiatives. Stay tuned for more details regarding this event.