

CELEBRATING 75 YEARS AS THE INDIANA SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION:

HONORING THE PAST AND LOOKING FORWARD TO A PROMISING FUTURE!

By Terry Spradlin, Executive Director



Turning 75-years old is a milestone worthy of celebration! As the Indiana School Boards Association has reached this milestone this year, school board members, past and present, can take pride that our organization has stood the test of time to support and defend America's most vital institution, public education. ISBA was created in 1949 through the Indiana University School of Education to serve school board members across Indiana. What an achievement that in 2024, ISBA continues to strive to fulfill its mission to support our members with the resources necessary for excellence in school board governance. While doing so, we remain true to the statement in our Code of Ethics of thinking in terms of "children first."

SUPPORTING EXCEPTIONAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOOSIER CHILDREN

The ISBA supports programs and policies to provide exceptional learning opportunities for Hoosier children. As a pillar of our Democracy, the power of public education is to not only prepare our citizenry to be productive and lawful tax-paying citizens, but college and career ready with a promising future. We strive to ensure students are equipped with the skills, abilities, and knowledge to be life-long learners in an ever-changing world. An effective K-12 public education system is an "engine of opportunity" for all students and a catalyst for economic development for the state. The higher the educational attainment level of Indiana residents, the better quality of life we will experience. Given that more than 90 percent of all K-12 students attend a public school, the families of more than 1 million students have spoken and have made public schools the "schools of choice." We believe that through local control, we have created a rich and diverse public education system that provides a multitude of learning environments, programs, and curricular offerings to students. Through these opportunities we prepare a new generation of students to be college and career ready, helping drive the prosperity of the state. Recognizing the "power of public education," let's collectively do all that we can to elevate student achievement outcomes to maintain our sphere of influence and impact (see my Spring 2024 Journal column for more on this objective).

HONORING THE PAST

Throughout 2024 we will continue to reflect on the history and work of the ISBA, as well as spotlight past leaders. Recently, I was honored to host a roundtable discussion with several of ISBA's past presidents to talk about the legacy of the Association. Many of these leaders referenced the support of ISBA to help them better understand their roles and responsibilities as board members. They praised the ample networking and collaboration opportunities that ISBA provides with board members from around the state, and commended ISBA's strong voice as an advocate for model board governance and K-12 public education, all key contributors to the legacy of ISBA. Adam VanOsdol, Communications Specialist/Content Strategist, has an excellent column in this edition of *The Journal* that spotlights the commentary and perspectives concerning the impact of ISBA shared by nine of its past presidents. The roundtable conversation will also be highlighted via a video at the 2024 ISBA-IAPSS Fall Conference to be held on September 23-24, at the Indiana Convention Center.

Speaking of past leaders, ISBA continues to pay tribute in memorial to Dr. Frank Bush, ISBA Executive Director from 1988-2014. His picture is prominently displayed on the cover of this edition of *The Journal*. Dr. Bush was a tremendously dedicated and tireless leader of the Association. His contributions built a strong foundation for ISBA that continues to contribute to its success today. Dr. Bush has left a legacy of elevated model school board governance in Indiana. Thank you, Frank. We miss you!

The beginnings of this publication, *The Journal*, dates to a meeting of the ISBA Executive Committee on October 17, 1954, when it approved a proposal to move forward with a sample of a printed journal for approval of the full membership at the subsequent annual meeting. The first edition of volume 1 of *The Hoosier School Board Journal* was then published in January 1955.

I found it fascinating to read in the February 1955 edition of *The Hoosier School Board Journal* that ISBA was tracking a total of 476 bills introduced by the Indiana General Assembly that year, including 21 bills directly related to public education. In contrast, there will be

approximately 1,100 bills filed in the 2025 legislative session and of those, more than 150 bills that are K-12 education or child-related legislation that ISBA will be monitoring.

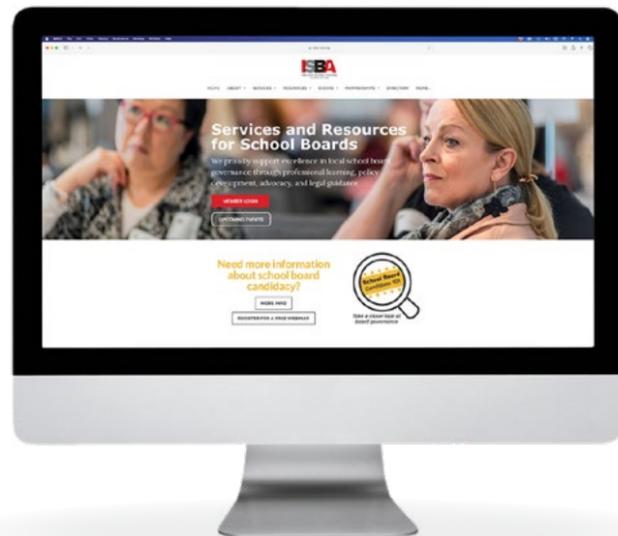
WHAT IS THE ISBA TODAY?

Headquartered in Indianapolis, ISBA is a 501(c)(4) non-profit organization comprised of 10 member regions. ISBA is governed by a Delegate Assembly and a 14-member Board of Directors consisting of 10 regional directors and four officers; all locally elected/appointed school board members who are selected by their fellow board members to fill these posts. ISBA is also supported by school board members who serve on the Legislative Committee, Awards Committee, Nominating Committee, and the Federal Relations Network Committee.

ISBA's membership services are categorized as follows: board services, legal services, policy services, and legislative services. Staff consists of the executive director, general counsel, senior counsel/director of policy services, staff attorney, director of board services, communications specialist/content strategist, events and promotions specialist, comptroller, and administrative assistant. ISBA represents all 290 school corporations, and the staff provides services to approximately 1,686 school board members throughout Indiana. Services include board retreats, workshops, webinars, seminars, conferences, and publication of a monthly e-newsletter and a quarterly association magazine. Most recently, consultant services for comprehensive policy management services and strategic planning have also been added. All ISBA staff members are available to assist school board members with specific issues at any time by telephone, mail, e-mail, or onsite board training services.

ISBA continues to enhance its website to provide timely and insightful information to you. Website traffic is up as a result! Visit: <https://www.isba-ind.org> to see the latest information dedicated to support you in your efforts to deliver effective governance for your school community.

Working closely with both the Consortium of State School Boards Association and the National School Boards Association as our Washington, D.C. offices, as well as dozens of other education organizations and governmental authorities throughout the state, the Indiana School Boards Association has earned the distinction of an acknowledged position as a leader in shaping educational programs helping to prepare students for the workforce or postsecondary education in a rapidly changing 21st century economy, and now in the world of artificial intelligence.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

“The ISBA is the premier resource in school governance and a respected advocate of public education,” is the vision statement guiding a three-year strategic plan adopted by the ISBA Board of Directors on June 3, 2022. The Board of Directors and staff worked collaboratively over the first half of 2022 to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that is guiding the Association to focus on effective programs and services for our members. There are five goal areas with clear and concise objectives that I want to remind you of:

▶ GOAL AREA #1: INCREASE MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT AND CONNECTEDNESS

OBJECTIVES:

- Assess board member needs continually to ensure their voice is heard and strengthened
- Enhance regional engagement by members
- Enhance and promote member services
- Address the unique needs and interests of members from socioeconomic perspectives (Rural, Urban, Suburban, Town, High SES, Low SES)

▶ GOAL AREA #2: ELEVATE EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

OBJECTIVES:

- Target and tailor communications to board members
- Expand awareness and elevate the status of the EGA program

- Improve ISBA brand
- Champion the positives of public education through ISBA communications

▶ GOAL AREA #3: BECOME A BEST PRACTICE RESOURCE FOR MEMBERS

OBJECTIVES:

- Provide timely and researched-based guidance and resources on issues facing school corporations and school boards
- Inform and guide members on best-practice implementation of effective board governance principles, roles, responsibilities, and strategies
- Elevate the value of resources available by core service area
- Improve content repository (of resources) via website resource library

▶ GOAL AREA #4: TAKE ISBA ADVOCACY TO THE NEXT LEVEL

OBJECTIVES:

- Inform, influence and shape sound governance policy for K-12 public education
- Increase members' overall knowledge of legislative process
- Equip members with effective techniques, strategies, and processes for grassroots advocacy and campaigns
- Enhance relationships with state government leaders (e.g., legislators, State Board of Education, IDOE, Office of the Governor, DUAB, DLGF, etc.)

▶ GOAL AREA #5: OPTIMIZE ORGANIZATIONAL AND OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

OBJECTIVES:

- Ensure continuity of services
- Enhance partnership programs
- Create ISBA human capital plan (staffing plan)

Since the adoption of the 2022-2025 strategic plan, ISBA has evaluated current programs and services and launched a handful of new offerings to better serve the needs of our members. Some of these new programs and services include:

- ✓ Reinstatement of Regional Director quarterly newsletters to highlight board service activities and news within each region of the state

- ✓ Addition of new website content such as the school board candidate webpage that provides a School Board Candidate Guide and FAQ, a board-superintendent roles and responsibilities overview, and the 2024 election procedures memo
- ✓ Expansion of on-demand video content of various training and professional development events such as the New Board Member Academy program
- ✓ Enhancement of the Legislative Action Network resources including the new “Top 3 Things to Know” weekly video update
- ✓ Delivery of essential board governance guidance through a regular schedule of resource guide and manual updates, including: Budgeting and Financial Oversight for School Board Members Resource Guide; Compulsory School Attendance Manual; Employee Discharge Manual; Student Discipline Manual; and the Model of Board Governance Manual, among others
- ✓ Elevation of board member recognition through the Exemplary Governance Awards program and the Exemplary Board Member Honor Roll and Wall at Fall Conference.

These new programs are a few of the components being driven by the strategic plan. We are committed to serving you to the best of our ability and being attentive to your perspectives, comments, and any concerns about your membership organization. In this regard, the 2024 ISBA Membership Survey was recently administered and just closed on July 3, 2024. We will be carefully reviewing the results of the survey to ensure we are responsive to meeting your needs and expectations. The survey results will also help guide the development of a new strategic plan that the ISBA Board of Directors will commence in developing in the spring of 2025.

I am honored to be serving as your Executive Director. I hope you can take pride in the history of your association, and I encourage you to take advantage of the programs and services offered today to you and your fellow board members. Working together we can undoubtedly achieve our vision of being the preeminent resource in school governance and a respected advocate of public education. We are here to support you in your efforts to put children first! 🍌