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# e-Dition



## In this e-Dition:

**As 2020-21 School Year Begins Fiscal Issues Loom Large**  
by Terry Spradlin,  
pages 1-2

**New Board Member Orientation**  
by Dr. Michael Adamson, page 3

**Appellate Court Overturns IEERB Interpretation of Bargaining Ancillary Duties**  
by Lisa Tanselle, Esq., page 4

**Student Attendance Policy for Virtual, Remote, or Blended Instructional Settings**  
by Julie Slavens, Esq., page 5

**ISBA Events Proceeding Virtually—Fall Conference Registration is Live!**  
by Terry Spradlin & Brooke Orner, page 6

## As 2020-21 School Year Begins—Fiscal Issues Loom Large

By **Terry Spradlin**, Executive Director, [tspradlin@isba-ind.org](mailto:tspradlin@isba-ind.org)



### COVID-19 and the Impact on Funding of ADM

As if 2020 wasn't already a peculiar, unprecedented year, the last two weeks have reinforced what an extraordinarily challenging year this has been. Just as school officials were finalizing their school corporation re-entry plans, after working tirelessly with employees over the summer months to implement COVID-19 health and safety guidance measures, they received disappointing guidance from the State House. ISBA, IAPSS, and IASBO received a letter from Senator Rod Bray, President Pro Tempore, on August 6, that we were asked to share with our members. It stated that funding for virtual education instruction may not be fully funded at 100% per ADM, if in-person classroom instruction is not offered to parents for their children. The timing of the letter from Senator Rod Bray has proved challenging and seems to alter an agreement by state leaders supporting the Indiana Department of Education guidance, issued on June 12, to provide 100% tuition support funding for an ADM count classification created for "virtual

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due to COVID.”

You have no doubt read or heard of the press coverage of this significant turn of events. As a result of the firestorm created by the Bray letter, Governor Holcomb announced his request of the State Board of Education to delay the ADM Count Day that has been scheduled for September 18, 2020, to at least a date in December. It is anticipated that the State Board of Education will hold an emergency meeting any day now to set the new date. However, this stopgap action, while greatly appreciated for the definitive leadership provided by Governor Holcomb, only delays a permanent solution. State law needs modified to accommodate full funding for K-12 education in a time no law could have ever been structured to anticipate, such as the public health crisis before us.

Senator Bray has been a strong ally to K-12 public education and helped secure the record increase of \$763 million in 2019-2021 biennium funding. He is correct that the law stipulates that any student receiving more than 50% instruction virtually will only be funded at 85%. It is also true that few people anticipated that approximately 40 school corporations would begin the year with 100% virtual education. However, we also did not anticipate the surge in COVID-19 infection rates that happened in July after the state had been fairing well in “flattening the curve.” We thought we had the solution for this issue by leaders agreeing to support 100% funding regardless of instructional methodology. The Bray letter simply creates a high degree of uncertainty and it provides no assurances of what school leaders can anticipate.

**ISBA, IAPSS and IASBO received a letter from President Pro Tempore, Senator Rod Bray. Read that letter [HERE](#).**

We have all heard the saying, “extraordinary times require extraordinary measures.” Now is that time! ISBA continues to advocate for decisive legislative action to remedy this critical funding matter on Organization Day scheduled for Tuesday, November 17. We have also called for the expansion of civil liability immunity coverage during the pandemic for school officials along with public health officials and other public servants. Both items could be key components of an emergency act passed by the state legislature, much like the multiple crisis measures already passed by Congress.

It is essential for the voice of school board members to continue to be heard on this matter. Please call, email, or write your area state senator to ask for their leadership to support full funding for Hoosier children enrolled in public schools this school year, regardless of in-person or e-learning instruction due to COVID-19. Legislator contact information can be found [HERE](#).