



Dear ISBA Members:

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Session Status

Week 8 of the 2024 short session of the Indiana General Assembly is complete. Of the 42 bills that ISBA has been tracking in the second half of the bill process, nine (9) died in committee without a hearing or vote by the committee report deadline earlier this week. Bills will have to pass out of the second chamber by March 4 in the House and March 5 in the Senate to remain active in the bill process. With that said, legislative leaders have declared that the session will end by Friday, March 8, six days earlier than the statutory deadline for adjournment sine die. A handful of the bills that ISBA has tracked this session will go to a conference committee, where conferees from the House and Senate discuss and negotiate the different versions of a bill passed by both chambers. Bills in conference committee are in jeopardy of passage given the reduced timeline to complete work on bills with the earlier adjournment date. There are five bills to provide timely updates to you here on...

- [House Education Committee](#)

SB 282 Various Education Matters (Author: Sen. S. Donato; Sponsor: Rep. M. Carbaugh). The House Education Committee on Tuesday accepted nine amendments to this bill intended to address truancy issues (which resulted in the bill now being referred to as a various education matters bill). The amendments pertaining to truancy include (1) requiring prosecutors to notify parents when their child has been identified as a habitual truant, (2) requiring schools to adopt discipline policies that prohibit a student who is identified as a habitual truant from participating in co-curricular and extracurricular activities, and (3) allowing parents to bring a representative of the parent's choosing to the attendance conference required in the truancy prevention policy. The bill passed out of the Committee by a vote of 9-2 and was order engrossed after being presented to the House for a second reading. No further amendments were made. The bill is eligible for a third reading in the House on Monday, March 4.

- [House Roads and Transportation Committee](#)

SB 30 School Bus Stop Arm Violation Enforcement (Author: Sen. R. Niemeyer; Sponsor: Rep. H. Slager) The introduced version of this bill would have allowed law enforcement to charge the registered owner of a vehicle with a Class B infraction if the vehicle passes a school bus when the arm signal device is in its extended position, without having to identify the driver of the vehicle. The bill also established certain defenses for the registered owner of the vehicle. On Wednesday ISBA, ISRSA, and eight superintendents testified in support of the bill. The bill passed out of the House Roads and Transportation Committee with a 12-1 vote and moved to the House floor for second reading on Thursday. On second reading Rep. Meltzer's amendment, removing Class B infraction and all defenses for the registered owner of the vehicle, prevailed with a 64-29 vote. Senate Bill 30 now requires the Bureau of Motor Vehicles to notify registered owners that a person who operates a vehicle and who recklessly passes a school bus stopped on a roadway or private road when the arm signal device is in its extended position commits a Class A misdemeanor. The bill was ordered engrossed, and it now moves to the floor of the House for third reading on Monday. It is anticipated that this bill will also land in conference committee.

- [Senate Tax & Fiscal Policy Committee](#)

HB 1120 Property Taxes (Author: Rep. J. Thompson; Sponsor: Sen. T. Holdman). This bill was heard in the Senate Tax & Fiscal Policy Committee on Tuesday. The committee adopted a “friendly” amendment to restore tax control sunset provisions established in House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1499-2023, that were removed from statute in the House-version of HB 1120. In other words, before the amendment adopted in committee this week, HB 1120 would have made permanent the caps on referenda revenue growth from AV increases as well as requiring referendums for controlled projects of school districts with a total Debt Service rate at 80 cents, or above, per \$100 AV. Now, HB 1120 extends through 2025 the expiration of the threshold amounts used for determining whether a political subdivision's project is a controlled project and whether the petition and remonstrance process or the referendum process applies based on the political subdivision's total debt service tax rate. Specifies that a political subdivision's total debt service tax rate does not include a tax rate approved by voters for a referendum debt service tax levy. Extends through 2026 the calculation to be used in determining the maximum levy growth quotient as added in the 2023 session in HEA 1499. Provides that distributions for curricular materials may not be considered for purposes of determining whether a school corporation met the requirement to expend 62% of state tuition support for teacher compensation. Repeals the requirement that each school maintained by a school corporation and each charter school establish a curricular materials account. Requires a public school to deposit distributions for curricular materials in: (1) the Education Fund of the school corporation that maintains the school; or (2) the fund in which a charter school receives state tuition support. It is likely that the bill author, Rep. Thompson, will dissent to the changes made by the Senate, forcing HB 1120 into conference committee.

- **Conference Committees**

HB 1137 Religious Instruction and School Chaplains (Author: Rep. K. Culp; Sponsor: Sen. J. Raatz). As reported last week, this bill requires a principal to release a student for religious instruction for up to 120 minutes each week and permits school corporations to hire, or approve as a volunteer, school chaplains under certain conditions. The bill passed the Senate on third reading on Tuesday by a vote of 34-14, but the House dissented from the amendments. The bill will go to a conference committee.

- **Fate on 2 Bills Decided**

SB 1 Reading Skills (Author: Sen. L. Rogers; Sponsor: Rep. J. Teshka). This bill has cleared all hurdles and will become law. It passed on third reading in the House on Tuesday by a 68-28 vote and then the Senate voted on a concurrence motion on Thursday that passed 29-16. Once signed by the Speaker and the President Pro Tempore, the bill will be sent to Governor Holcomb for his signature. No doubt that he will sign this bill into law since it was a high priority in his 2024 legislative agenda. ISBA is hopeful that this legislation will contribute to higher reading proficiency levels for elementary school students.

HB 1376 School Controlled Project Referendum (Author: Rep. B. Behning; Sponsor: Sen. A. Freeman). This bill to restrict the timing of controlled project referenda to November general elections died in the Senate Elections Committee this week without a vote. It was initially scheduled for a hearing on Monday, but then the committee meeting was cancelled due to an apparent lack of support for this bill. It was the only bill on the committee docket that day. We thank many senators for their position against this bill that led to its demise. This outcome was realized due to a tremendous grassroots advocacy effort by school officials, including many school board members across the state.

Thank you for your participation in the ISBA Legislative Action Network. You are to be commended for standing united in support of sound K-12 education policy in Indiana!

Sincerely,

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