



# ***Hoosier School Board Members work for better schools through the Indiana School Boards Association***

## **The Story of the Indiana School Boards Association**

### ***The Growth and Purposes of the Indiana School Boards Association***

The growth of state associations of school boards reflects the increasing need for services by local school boards. Associations of local school boards in the various states attack the problems of American education with vigor and are extremely effective.

The Indiana School Boards Association (ISBA) was organized in 1949. School boards governing Indiana school corporations hold membership with ISBA. Members of the Association have jurisdiction over the schools which educate 99 percent of the public school children in Indiana.

The major purposes of the Association, as stated in the Constitution, are six fold: (1) conduct seminars for school board members on educational policies, practices and programs; (2) study educational problems as they affect Indiana; (3) inform school board members and the general public of the results of studies made by the Association; (4) provide the General Assembly of the State of Indiana and other governmental bodies with pertinent information relative to legislation affecting education; (5) participate in informational meetings and programs with public officials, school administrators, teachers, students of education and government, interested individuals and organizations in order to advance the cause of Indiana public school education; and (6) engage in other activities related to its purpose.

### ***Government and Organization***

ISBA is an organization of school board members. Membership in the Association is by individual school corporation with each of the local school board members automatically holding membership in ISBA. The superintendent of schools, by virtue of the position held, is an associate member.

The Constitution of the Association empowers an elected Board of Directors to manage its affairs and transact its business. The President, First Vice President, Second Vice President and Immediate Past President serve one year terms and 10 Directors, one from each ISBA region, serve three year terms. All must be local school board members.

### ***Publications and Services***

The Indiana School Boards Association conducts research of significance to the school boards of the state. The results of this research are reported in the ISBA Journal, and in separate reports which are forwarded to school board members and superintendents. A series of bulletins summarizing salary schedules and contract language reached through collective bargaining, and the management survey of administrative salaries and fringe benefits are also available. Other publications related to special areas of interest are produced as needed.

An important in-service aspect of the work of the Association includes publication of the ISBA Journal, a magazine for school board members. The Journal includes timely articles which are concerned with educational matters of which school board members should be informed. The ISBA uses electronic mail as our primary means of communication with the membership of all Indiana school corporations. This system allows instant contact via a computerized communication network between and among the ISBA and participating local school officials.

The Association employs a full-time legal staff to assist local school attorneys and officials to research questions pertaining to school law and to conduct workshops on current problems in school law. The Association publishes periodic legal reports researching the status of contemporary legal problems. Typical reports have dealt with teacher collective bargaining, maternity leaves, EEOC regulations, school finance, control of school premises, student rights and due process, dismissal and nonrenewal of employees, the Federal Age Discrimination Act, and reduction-in-force. The Association occasionally supports school boards involved in significant legal suits by filing an Amicus Curiae (Friend of the Court) brief.

Services of Association personnel are available to local school boards on a consultative basis. Particularly prevalent are meetings with newly organized school boards for the purpose of discussing the legal and ethical

responsibilities of board membership. In addition, any school board involved in a special problem, such as employment of a superintendent of schools, teacher/board collective bargaining relationships, development of written policy handbook or related matters, is urged to contact the Association.

### ***Meetings***

Each year the Association sponsors seminars for school board members. The seminars are usually one day functions with their primary purpose being orientation of board members to their responsibilities. Regional meetings are held throughout the state each spring and fall to update and to exchange information pertinent to legislative and education issues.

The ISBA also sponsors an annual Summer Board Member Academy that focuses on the many facets of good boardmanship (for both new board members and veteran board members) and a Winter Board Member Academy for new school board members every other year. These academies are important curricular experiences for Indiana school board members.

In the fall of each year ISBA sponsors an Annual Conference. Outstanding experts are secured as speakers and various sessions led by experienced board members attending the Annual Conference has been reported as being extremely pertinent and worthwhile.

### ***Legislation***

The Association, feeling that the voice of school boards should be heard by the Indiana General Assembly, sponsors a legislative program. Spring regional legislative meetings are held for the purpose of soliciting suggestions from member boards. The suggestions received are evaluated by the ISBA Legislative Committee, which is comprised of board members throughout Indiana. Following adoption by the Delegate Assembly at the Annual Conference, the program is presented at the 10 regional meetings in the fall to fully prepare for the approaching session of the General Assembly.

During each session of the General Assembly, the Executive Director and/or other representatives of the Association are present at the State House, charged with the responsibility of working toward the passage of the ISBA program and taking action on other legislation of significance to public education. The Association regularly publishes a legislative bulletin which is mailed to the board presidents, superintendents, ISBA legislative liaisons and others. A daily legislative update is transmitted to all school corporations receiving the electronic mail.

The voice of the school boards has been effective in the Indiana General Assembly. Dozens of statutes have been drafted and enacted into law through the efforts of ISBA. Examples are:

- General School Powers Act of 1965
- School Transportation Code of 1965
- Joint Purchase Laws of 1971
- Student Due Process Code of 1972 and 1995 (landmark legislation clarifying procedures for the suspension or expulsion of students)
- Student Transfer Law of 1976
- Funding Opening of New Facilities of 1977
- Separate Transportation Fund of 1979
- Capital Projects Fund of 1987 and expanded purposes in 1989
- Home Rule of 1989
- Open Door Law of 1990  
(executive sessions for board role and responsibilities discussion)
- Pension Plan of 1995  
(authority for school corporations to establish a defined contribution and nonqualified deferred compensation plan)
- School Accountability of 1999  
(a system of accountability for school performance and improvement)
- Charter Schools of 2001  
(charter school programs with an option for local school board sponsorship)

- Rainy Day Fund of 2002  
(a local option to set aside funds for emergency or other use)
  - School Boards for Retirement/Severance Liability of 2003
  - Local Government Reorganization of 2006 and a host of others. The ISBA has been instrumental in preventing teacher collective bargaining legislation from being expanded and has played a major role in advising and supporting many of the education reform package components in recent years.
- The Association has also been active in the area of school finance and has continually worked toward more adequate state financing of local school systems.

### ***The National School Boards Association (NSBA)***

ISBA is a dues-paying member of NSBA, a federation of the 50 state school boards associations in the United States and its territories. Boards holding membership in ISBA are thus represented to NSBA.

NSBA sponsors an annual National Convention, which has an outstanding program for school board members. Indiana has been well represented at recent National Conventions and each school board is asked to consider the desirability of having at least one of its members participate in the NSBA Convention.

NSBA also has available the American School Board Journal, the Executive Educator and the School Board News.

### ***Payment of Dues and Expenditures***

I.C. 20-26-5-8 authorizes the payment of dues by school corporations to “state and national associations of an educational nature that have as their purpose the improvement of school governmental operations.” The Act also provides that school corporations are authorized to “participate through duly designated representatives in the meetings and activities of the associations,” and may “appropriate the necessary funds to defray the expenses of the representatives in connection with the meetings and activities.”

The Indiana General Assembly has, therefore, authorized payment of membership dues by school boards in such organizations as ISBA and also has authorized the payment of the expenses of individual board members in attendance at the meetings and conferences of both ISBA and NSBA.

### ***ISBA and Your Board***

Much of the value of membership in ISBA is intangible in nature. With the increasing complexity of the modern educational program, board members should continually improve their understanding of their role in assuring the best possible education for the children of their local communities. Board members, however, have another responsibility. As state officers, board members must be interested in the education of all the children of the state. This function can best be met by a strong school boards association. The ISBA strives to be the focal point for local school boards. Hopefully, one phone call or a single contact with ISBA can provide all members with answers, assistance and information regarding any issue dealing with the operation and management of a local school corporation.

School board associations all over the nation are finding that legislators and others who control public education at the state level are becoming increasingly aware of and more concerned with the point of view of school board members. This is a group of lay people with no thought of personal gain. This is a group whose only reason for existence is better education for children. The appeals of strong state school boards associations have met increasingly favorable responses from state officials and legislators. It is vital that ISBA continues to be strong, and it is important that every school board in Indiana be a member of ISBA. Only in this way can we learn from each other, share our experiences, provide services, present an effective voice to the Indiana General Assembly and with strength and effectiveness support the needs of public education.

### ***Sources of Financial Support***

Financial support of the Association comes from membership dues, advertising in the ISBA Journal, charges for exhibit space at the Annual Conference, registration fees for Association conferences and meetings, including the

Annual Conference. The dues schedule of the Association is based upon the general fund and transportation fund expenditures of the school corporation. The dues schedule was last revised in October 1990 by the ISBA Delegate Assembly at the Annual Conference.

***Schedule of Annual Dues***

General Fund Expenditures and  
Transportation Fund Expenditure Dues Assessed

\$32,000,000 and over	\$ 4500
28,000,000 - 31,999,999	4400
24,000,000 - 27,999,999	4300
20,000,000 - 23,999,999	4200
16,000,000 - 19,999,999	4100
13,000,000 - 15,999,999	3900
10,000,000 - 12,999,999	3800
8,000,000 - 9,999,999	3700
7,000,000 - 7,999,999	3600
5,000,000 - 6,999,999	3400
4,000,000 - 4,999,999	3200
3,000,000 - 3,999,999	2900
1,000,000 - 2,999,999	2700
Less than 1,000,000	2400

*For more information, contact the Executive Director of the Indiana School Boards Association.*

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