



Dear ISBA Members:

Here is your **Week #15 ISBA Legislative Update**...Next week is the last week of the 2021 budget session, with either Wednesday or Thursday being the last session day. As previously mentioned, the Indiana General Assembly may only recess next week—not adjourn sine die—to allow them to come back at a time of their choosing (as late as November 15) to address congressional and legislative redistricting.

The big news for this week was the updated state revenue forecast for Fiscal Years 2021 through 2023 received yesterday by the State Budget Committee. The surprisingly good news is that the state is projected to have nearly \$2 billion more in revenue available over the next two years to factor into the budget and to ensure adequate funding of state government programs and services. ISBA is calling for an increase in funding for K-12 public education and at least a 3 percent increase each fiscal year in the tuition support formula.

Inflation rates are jumping in the U.S. (now 2.6%) and the Midwest (now 3.0% for the 12-month period ending in March), so the tuition support increases should meet or exceed these numbers. For more information on the state revenue forecast, please see the ISBA press release [HERE](#).

ISBA Bill Tracking List

To view the ISBA Bill Tracking List, click [HERE](#). The second reading deadline of bills was on Monday and the third reading deadline was on bills Tuesday for bills in the second chamber. Bills not passing on third reading in the second chamber this week are now dead. As a result, there are now 46 bills on the tracking list that are likely on the way to becoming law. Some bills are headed to conference committee, where conferees from both the House and Senate negotiate on the different versions of bills passed by each chamber. It is possible, though not too likely, that a few bills die in this final stage of the session. Overall, ISBA began tracking 179 bills at the start of session, then 61 bills in the second half of the bill process, and now we are at the count of 46 bills.

Key K-12 Education Bill Activity

**Each of the following bills have critical updates for your information...*

[SB 54 FAFSA Awards](#); Author: Senator Leising; Sponsor: Representative Behning. The conference committee for SB 54 met this week. An amendment being considered by the committee is one that would combine the House and Senate versions of the bill. The proposed amendment would maintain the mandate that a senior student complete the FAFSA (or school administrators secure a waiver) AND create the incentive award program to reward school corporations that increase their FAFSA completion rate, not one or the other. The committee also discussed delaying implementation of the bill to the 2022-23 school year. ISBA continues to object to the mandate and has asked the conferees to support the House version of the bill (that provides the incentive

funding). A conference committee report has not been published.

[SB 358](#) School Buildings; Author: Senator Rogers; Sponsor: Representative Behning. After a long debate on the floor of the Senate, the bill that will require school boards to make vacant school buildings available to charter schools AND state universities for lease or purchase for \$1 passed by a concurrence vote of 28-21 on Tuesday (see how your senator voted [HERE](#)). Other requirements in the bill include new enforcement mechanisms that authorize the Attorney General's office to investigate any complaint that a school board is not abiding by the law and require a school board to obtain a certification from the Attorney General's office that the board followed the law before selling, exchanging, demolishing, holding without operating, or disposing of a vacant school building. The bill moves on to the Governor for his signature. ISBA thanks Senator Ron Alting for his compelling and passionate remarks on the Senate floor in opposition to this legislation and in support of K-12 public education.

[HB 1266](#) Education building and transportation authorities; Author: Representative Clere; Sponsor: Senator Donato. This bill was amended on second reading in the Senate on Monday to remove provisions of the bill explicitly referencing the creation of school building authorities and transportation authorities. The bill still creates an RFI process administered by the Indiana Department of Education for the purposes of "exploring potential opportunities to improve the efficiency of noninstructional school services." Senator Donato in her explanation of the bill on third reading on Tuesday said that "schools would have until February 1, 2022, to submit this information" and that the IDOE would be required to provide the governing bodies of school corporations and the Legislative Council of the Indiana General Assembly the report of the information gathered no later than March 1, 2022. With the amendment included, the bill passed in the Senate by a 32-17 [VOTE](#). While the

amendment made the bill less objectionable, ISBA will closely monitor the guidance IDOE provides regarding the administration of the RFI. ISBA thanks Senators Becker, Walker, Tomes, Alting, J.D. Ford, and others for their efforts that led to the amendment and watered-down bill.

Grassroots Advocacy at Work

Please review the ISBA press release regarding the budget provided in the introduction to this update and email or phone your area legislators **this weekend** to: 1) support increases of 3 percent each year of the 2021-2023 biennium; 2) support the Senate version of the school funding formula that increases special education funding and makes sound adjustments to the Complexity Index; and, 3) oppose both the creation of Education Scholarship Accounts and the expansion of the Choice Scholarship voucher program to upper-middle class families.

Sincerely,



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