



Dear ISBA Members:

Here is the Week #3 ISBA Legislative Update to provide you with essential information on the latest developments of the 2023 session of the Indiana General Assembly.

Bill Tracking List

ISBA makes available to members an automated bill tracking list to assist you in following the status and progress of all the bills that the Association will be monitoring. ISBA presently is tracking 220 bills that address local or school governance matters, taxation, children, or K-12 education policy. Check the ISBA Bill Tracking List [HERE](#).

Key Bill Activity for Week #3

[SB 305](#) **Indiana Education Scholarship Account Program** (Author: Senator Buchanan) was back on the agenda of the Senate Education and Career Development Committee on Wednesday. As introduced, the bill amends the current ESA program for special needs students to change program eligibility to any student with legal settlement in Indiana and who is at least 5 years of age and less than 22 years of age. The list of qualified expenses is proposed to expand beyond a long list that already includes tuition to include curricular materials, expenses to attend a career or technical education center, computer hardware or other technological devices, and any other expenses approved by the Treasurer of State (the program administrator). The bill also changes the ESA grant amount an eligible student can receive in the program from 90% to

100% of the student's home school corporation's per-student Basic Tuition Support Grant for the previous school year. An amendment was adopted during the hearing to reserve 50 percent of dedicated ESA funds for special needs students, maintaining an emphasis on the students the program in 2021 was created to serve. Senator Buchanan stated that his request would be to maintain the ESA program funding at the current \$10 million per year. The bill was voted out of the committee with the amendment by an 8-5 vote and has been recommitted to the Senate Appropriations Committee for further consideration.

[SB 486 Education Matters](#) (Author: Senator Rogers) was heard in the Senate Education and Career Development Committee on Wednesday. The bill has many provisions, including (1) requiring the curriculum of teacher preparation programs to include content on specific teacher training requirements and requiring the Department of Education to establish an online platform for additional teacher training requirements, (2) amending the staff performance evaluation law to allow school corporations to determine their own evaluation plans, and (3) eliminating the mandate to discuss specific subjects with the exclusive representative and instead allowing school officials to discuss with an employee or group of employees matters that impact the employee's work. ISBA, along with several education organizations, testified in support of the bill. A vote will likely be scheduled for next Wednesday.

[HB 1167 Live Streaming and Archiving Meetings](#) (Author: Representative Smaltz) was heard in the House Committee on Government and Regulatory Reform on Tuesday. The bill requires governing bodies of all public agencies – school boards included – to live stream their meetings and retain copies of the meetings for 90 days. If the governing body does not have Internet capability, the board must record the meeting. The bill passed out of Committee by a vote of 11-0 and has been recommitted to the House Ways and Means Committee for further consideration.

[HB 1558 Science of Reading](#) (Author: Representative Teshka) received a hearing Wednesday in the House Education Committee. The bill creates the science of reading grant fund and appropriates \$20 million to the fund to 1) assist school corporations in placing literacy instructional coaches in elementary schools, 2) assist teachers in obtaining additional training in the science of reading, and 3) assist school corporations in meeting the obligation to adopt a curriculum for reading that aligns with the science of reading. The bill passed by a 12-0 vote and was recommitted to the House Ways and Means

Committee for further consideration.

Residential Housing Program TIFs

[House Bill 1081](#) **Residential Tax Increment Financing** (Author: Representative Heine) was heard in the House Local Government Committee on Tuesday and was amended by consent to allow all localities to create a residential TIF district. An amendment had been prepared to eliminate the role of school boards in approving residential TIF districts, but the amendment was not offered. The bill was held, and the committee chair indicated that a vote on the bill will take place at a future committee meeting. ISBA testified that we share in the goal of addressing the housing shortage but believe some percentage cap should remain in statute to deter the unfettered use of residential TIF districts in areas where residential development would happen regardless. ISBA also advocated for maintaining the “good government” provision requiring school board resolution approval of the proposed HoTIF, as this process has enhanced local government communication, collaboration, and community planning. ISBA thanks David Finkel, school board member from Shelbyville Central, who shared his expert knowledge on local government while advocating for appropriate guardrails in use of HoTIFs and supported the value of school board review and signoff. Brad Crain, the mayor of Covington, gave testimony in which he spoke disdainfully about how the local school board vetoed a proposed residential TIF district. The Indiana Farm Bureau testified in support of continuing the role of the school board in signing off on the creation of a residential TIF district and said there ought to be parameters to define the need for a residential TIF. The Association of Indiana Municipalities testified in favor of eliminating school boards from the process and said developers need an incentive to recoup the cost of infrastructure. The Indiana Economic Development Association testified that as much as Indiana communities need affordable, adequate housing, they also need good schools. The Association of Indiana Counties, while currently neutral on the bill, advocated for a “passthrough” provision to local units of some percentage of the incremental Assessed Valuation captured in the HoTIF.

[SB 300](#) **Residential Tax Increment Financing** (Author: Senator Rogers). This bill removes the threshold conditions (1% cap) for establishing a residential housing development program and a tax increment allocation area for the program, including the condition that the governing body of each school corporation affected by the program pass a resolution approving the program before the program may go into effect. This bill was heard in the Senate Tax & Fiscal Policy Committee on Tuesday, minutes after HB 1081 was heard in

House Local Government Committee. The discussion and testimony on this bill closely mirrored the testimony on HB 1081. SB 300 was moved out of committee with a 10-2 vote. ISBA thanks Senators Greg Walker and Eddie Melton for their “nay” votes. *Please communicate with your area senator on SB 300 about any concerns you may have about the impact of HoTIF expansion on your school corporation Operations Fund levies.*

5th Annual ISBA State House Day

Please mark your calendar for **the 5th Annual ISBA State House Day on February 21**, to be held in Indiana Ballrooms E-G at the Indianapolis Downtown Marriott, 350 W. Maryland Street, Indianapolis. We are asking board presidents and legislative liaisons for every school board to attend. If you cannot make it, please ask another board representative from your school board to attend. We are requesting only two members from every board to attend to contain costs. This will be at no charge to attendees. We will also be providing each attendee a stipend of \$35 to assist with any parking and mileage expenses. A separate email was sent last week with full details and the agenda for this event. Another comprehensive email will be sent next week, or if you have any questions, please email me at: tspradlin@isba-ind.org.

Please RSVP your attendance via email to Casey Conrad at: cconrad@isba-ind.org. We have sent a letter of invitation from ISBA to all legislators inviting them to attend, but once you know that you will be coming, please extend a personal invitation via email message or letter to your legislators to join you at your table (that will be indicated by table markers by ISBA region).

Thank you for reading the ISBA Weekly Legislative Update and your efforts and contributions to engage in the ISBA Legislative Action Network!

Sincerely,

Sincerely,



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