



Dear ISBA Members:

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Greetings!

What a busy week at the State House capped off by the ISBA Live Legislative Update Webinar yesterday. This update includes **two call-to-action alerts that need your immediate response in opposition to HB 1376 and HB 1380**. Before I dig into the details of the week, I want to share with you that the Weekly Legislative Updates are a compilation of work by the ISBA Legislative Action Network (LAN) Team, including Lisa Tanselle, Bre'Anna Donaldson, Adam VanOsdol, Haley Crnarich, and Ryan Crnarich (ISBA legislative intern). Here is the Week #2 ISBA Legislative Update that we've prepared.

ISBA “Top 3 Things to Know” Weekly Video Update

As announced last week, new in 2024, ISBA is offering you a video series titled "Top 3 Things to Know Video Update" to supplement the many resources that will continue as a part of ISBA's Legislative Action Network. I will do my very best to keep the updates succinct, which many of you know can be a challenge for me — so much to talk about! In this second installment, I've condensed dozens of hours of committee hearing discussions on several bills into a 6+ minute update. View the Week 2 “Top Three Things to Know Video Update” [HERE](#).

ISBA Bill Tracking List

A total of 752 bills have been introduced this session. ISBA is now tracking 113 bills, including 67 House Bills and 46 Senate Bills, that are relevant to K-12 education policy, school governance, or child-related legislation. You can view the ISBA Bill Tracking List [HERE](#).

ISBA in Action

The ISBA LAN Team covered nine committee hearings and testified on six bills (in support of 4 and opposition to 2). Here we will highlight some of the key bills discussed in these hearings.

- [House Elections & Apportionment](#)
- **[HB 1376 Election Day for School Referenda](#)** (Author: Rep. R. Behning). This bill provides that a local public question concerning certain education matters, including a school referendum tax levy and school safety referendum tax levy, may be placed on the ballot only at a general election or municipal general election. Representative Behning argued that this bill is “taxpayer friendly” to ensure that school corporation referendums are held during elections with the highest voter participation. For most school corporations, HB 1376 would restrict the opportunity for a referendum to only the November general election every two years. **ISBA, testifying also on behalf of IAPSS and IASBO, opposed this bill** as it takes away local decision-making flexibility and management regarding referendum

campaigns on budgeting, facility management, and school safety needs that must be addressed in a timelier manner than once every two years. School corporations need the ability to manage financial needs when they occur, not have to incur a 24-month delay forced by this bill.

- ***PLEASE CALL, EMAIL, OR TEXT YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE IMMEDIATELY TO ASK THAT THEY OPPOSE HB 1376.***

- Talking Points: School officials who decide to move forward with a referendum consider all the facts and options before moving forward with a referendum proposal. Some never move forward with a referendum proposal because of insufficient community support. Those that do move forward by approval of school board resolution and adoption of a referendum spending plan, work extremely hard to inform voters about the merits of the proposal. Voters have a choice, and many referenda fail. In fact, approximately 40% of referendums failed in 2023 and 36% of all referendums historically have failed going back to 2010. The system works and doesn't need to change.

- [Senate Education & Career Development Committee](#)
- **SB 1 Reading Skills** (Author: Senator L. Rogers). This bill requires certain schools to offer summer school courses for students who are not reading proficient or are at risk of not being reading proficient as indicated on the determinant evaluation of reading skills approved by the state board of education (evaluation). Expands eligibility for funding for summer school courses. Requires certain summer school courses to be taught by a teacher who is trained in the science of reading. Requires the Department of Education (department) to procure a universal screening assessment (assessment) that meets certain criteria. Applies the reading deficiency remediation plan (plan) to public schools, charter schools, state-accredited nonpublic schools, and

eligible schools. Beginning with evaluations administered in the 2024-2025 school year, changes the plan to require retention of a student in grade 3 in addition to remediation if the student has not achieved a passing score on the evaluation. Other provisions are not summarized here; see bill for more details. ISBA testified in support of this bill along with several other K-12 education associations. Chairman Raatz indicated that 17 people signed up to testify in support of the bill, 7 in opposition, and 5 neutral. The bill passed out of the Committee as amended by a 9-4 vote.

- **[SB 185](#) Student Use of Cellular Telephones** (Author: Senator J. Raatz). This bill requires each school corporation and charter school to adopt and implement a cellular telephone policy that restricts student use of a cellular telephone while participating in an approved course. This provision is limited to restrictions on access or use of cell phones while in the classroom. Senator Raatz held the bill and indicated that the bill will be amended next week to consider language found in HB 1198 on the same issue. ISBA joined with IAPSS, and other K-12 education associations, in support of this bill. We contend it will establish consistency in policy and help with enforcement of restrictions across the state. Use of personal communications devices have become a significant distraction in the classroom, yet the bill maintains local control in defining exceptions or acceptable uses of devices on school grounds outside of classroom instructional time. This bill will be amended and voted on in committee on 1/24.
- **[House Education](#)**
- **[HB 1104](#) School Safety** (Author: Rep. M. Davis). This bill requires school corporations to develop school safety plans that include an armed intruder drill protocols and prohibits an armed intruder drill from including sensory components or activities (defined as simulations of gunfire or gunshot wounds/injuries,

the use of a prop firearm, the use of a pellet gun, or participation in the drill by law enforcement personnel with drawn firearms) that require student participation or take place during school hours when a majority of the student body is present on school property. The bill also allows school corporations who employ school resource officers or contract with law enforcement or other entities for a school resource officer to participate in the 1977 pension fund. **ISBA testified in support of the bill.** It passed out of Committee by a 12-0 vote.

- **[HB 1243](#) Various Education and Workforce Related Matters** (Author: Rep. R. Behning). This is the Indiana Department of Education's bill that makes numerous changes to existing statutes regarding Indiana high school diploma requirements and designations. The bill includes provisions that will require students in cohorts that are expected to graduate in 2029 or thereafter to complete a computer science course as a separate subject in order to graduate. Other provisions include: (1) allowing not more than the greater of 1% of a school's graduation cohort that receives an alternate diploma or one student to be counted as graduated when determining the school's graduation rate; (2) eliminating the waiver opportunity for school corporations that do not meet the requirement to spend at least 62% of tuition support on teacher compensation and instead requiring the Department to notify those school corporations of such and then requiring those local school boards to publicly acknowledge receipt of the notice at a public meeting and post the notice on their websites; and (3) directing the Department to conduct an annual survey on fees charged by public schools and posting a summary of the survey on its website. The bill was held by the chair for a vote at a future meeting.

- [HB 1380](#) **Various Education Matters** (Author: Rep. R. Behning). The introduced version of this bill included language that would have prohibited school boards from seeking to extend an operating referendum tax levy or consecutive operating referendum tax levies. Fortunately, Rep. Behning authored an amendment to remove that provision from the bill. Other sections of the bill, as amended, include: (1) a requirement for the Secretary of Education to prepare and submit to the General Assembly by November 1, 2024, a plan to establish two pilot programs – one on use of school facilities for enhanced learning environments and learning opportunities and one on increasing transportation opportunities for all students to travel to and from a school or other learning opportunity; and (2) a provision that shifts the burden of proof in certain special education due process hearings to the school corporation and prohibits a school corporation from requiring parents to enter into a nondisclosure, nondisparagement, or confidentiality clause as part of a resolution agreement. **ISBA as well as the other education management associations testified in opposition to the language on shifting the burden to school corporations.** The bill passed out of the Committee by a 7-4 vote. ***CALL-TO-ACTION #2: PLEASE CALL, EMAIL, OR TEXT YOUR STATE REPRESENTATIVE IMMEDIATELY TO ASK THAT THEY OPPOSE HB 1380.***

- [Senate Family & Children Services Committee](#)

- [SB 153](#) **Child Care Regulation Matters** (Author: Senator L. Rogers). This bill will allow the Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning to reallocate funds. Childcare providers who receive reimbursement through the Child Care and Development Fund program will be required to have a cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification person present while children are present. Under SB 153 the cardiopulmonary resuscitation certification will be valid for two years instead of

one year. SB 153 replaces the word “grant” with “child care voucher” in the On My Way Pre-K program and CCDF legislation. SB 153 gives disability assistance-eligible veterans children eligibility for the On My Way Pre-K program. The bill passed out of the Committee by a 6-0 vote.

- **[SB 171 Reunification Plan for a Child in Need of Services](#)** (Author: Senator G. Walker). The default position of Indiana courts is to make reasonable efforts to reunify children with their parents. However, there are certain exceptions to this rule, such as when it is not in the child’s best interest to be reunited with their parent. Under SB 171 exemptions have been added. For instance, when the parent is on the sex or violent offender registry, or when the child has been subjected to CPS services, greater than two instances of removal from home or abuse and neglect reports. Under SB 171 courts should not presume that reunification is automatically in the child’s best interest. Instead, a thorough investigation is needed to determine what would be best for the child. Despite strong public testimony opposing this bill, it passed out of the Committee by a 6-0 vote.
- **[House Employment, Labor and Pensions Committee](#)**
- **[HB 1093 Employment of Minors](#)** (Author: Rep. K. Culp). The bill provides certain exemptions from the law on the employment of minors. Rep. Culp described the intent of the bill is to align Indiana to the same youth employment standards as the federal government. According to Rep. Culp, Indiana currently has more "restrictive" youth employment laws than the federal government and he stated that this is a pro-business bill that will help keep businesses fully staffed. The bill expands work hours so youth can work on school nights and includes provisions for students who completed 8th grade but did not go onto high school allowing

them to work during traditional school hours with parental permission. Four people testified in support of HB 1093, two members of the Amish community, a small business owner, and a representative from Indiana Beach. The basis of their support is that communities know what is best for kids, youth help with employment needs, kids want to work more, and federal safety laws will still protect. An Indiana AFL-CIO representative testified in opposition to the bill stating that this goes against decades of child labor protection and Indiana values that we want Hoosiers to get high school diplomas, and they cited that not completing school past 8th grade hurts chances of success. The bill passed out of committee with amendments by an 8-3 vote. ISBA did not testify on this bill but will examine the bill more closely and will speak to the bill author about concerns on the bill. Please email me directly with any concerns that you have with this legislation, and I will carry them forward.

Live Legislative Update

More than 100 people participated in the first ISBA Legislative Update of the session. Thank you to those who joined the webinar and for the many excellent questions that you submitted. We also thank Senator Linda Rogers, who spoke about Senate Bill 1 on Grade 3 student proficiency in reading, and Representative Jake Teska, who spoke about House Bill 1219, a various education matters bill that focuses on education regulatory relief. ISBA supports both measures. Senator Rogers and Representative Teshka were gracious with their time and willingness to answer members' questions. You can view the webinar [HERE](#).

6th Annual ISBA State House Day

Nothing is more powerful than ISBA members in action via grassroots advocacy empowered by the ISBA Legislative Action Network! The 6th Annual State House Day is a prime opportunity for you to have firsthand engagement with your area legislators. In addition to hearing from caucus leaders and education committee leaders during two

excellent panel discussions, we encourage you to invite your area legislators to join you for conversation during the noon luncheon portion of the event. For more information, see the [Agenda HERE](#) and [Register HERE](#). As a reminder, we encourage your school board president and board legislative liaison, or some combination of two board member representatives of your board, to attend the complimentary event and receive a \$35 stipend for parking and mileage.

Contact Your Area Legislators During Session

To find your legislators and contact information visit [HERE](#)

Thank you for your participation in the ISBA Legislative Action Network. Let's stand united to support sound K-12 education policy in Indiana!

Sincerely,



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