



Dear ISBA Members:

Here is your **Week #9 ISBA Legislative Update**. Speculation is swirling that legislative leaders intend to conclude the budget session a week earlier than the statutory deadline of April 29. That would leave seven (7) weeks of the session before us. Let's stand united and speak out and up for the issues of importance to K-12 public education!

ISBA Bill Tracking List

To view the ISBA Bill Tracking List, click [HERE](#). The summary to follow in this update may not highlight a bill of interest to you, so please check out the tracking list report for full details on every bill still active and relevant to K-12 public education.

Key K-12 Education Bill Activity

[SB 2](#) Funding for virtual instruction in public schools; Author: Senator Raatz; Sponsor: Representative Slager. Establishes a definition of "virtual instruction" for purposes of determining a school corporation's basic tuition support using the: (1) 2020 fall count; and (2) 2021 spring count; of average daily membership. This bill

passed by a bipartisan vote of 20-0 on Monday and will be eligible for a third reading vote in the House on Monday, March 8. **ISBA supports this legislation.**

SB 54 FAFSA requirement; Author: Senator Leising; Sponsor: Representative Behning. Requires all students, except for students at certain nonpublic schools, in their senior year to complete and submit the FAFSA unless: (1) a parent of a student or a student, if the student is an emancipated minor, signs a waiver that the student understands what the FAFSA is and declines to complete it; or (2) the principal or school counselor of the student's high school waives the requirement due to extenuating circumstances. Requires that the: (1) model notice prepared by the commission for higher education; and (2) notice that each school corporation is required to send; regarding the FAFSA include information regarding the requirements and exceptions for completing the FAFSA.

ISBA opposes SB 54 as it places a significant burden on school personnel to ensure that this documentation is completed. Counselors and principals will become the “FAFSA police.” While there are certainly benefits to the student and the student’s family for completing the application, not every parent wants financial assistance from the federal government. This bill infringes on parental rights to complete a cumbersome, long federal form with extensive personal information. School employees recognize their role to inform and educate students and parents about the benefits of FAFSA, and to provide assistance in answering questions and completing the application. This bill goes beyond that and forces school employees to insist that parents inform school officials of their decision on whether to complete the application. **Please call your area state representative to ask that they vote “NO” on SB 54!**

SB 342 State tax credit for public school foundation contributions; Author: Senator Buchanan; Sponsor: Rep. Manning. This bill provides a 25% state tax credit for contributions made to a public school foundation for taxable years beginning after December 31, 2021, and before January 1, 2024. Provides that the amount allowable as a credit in a taxable year may not exceed: (1) \$1,000 in the case of an individual filing a single return or a corporation; or (2) \$2,000 in the case of a married couple filing a joint return. Provides that the maximum amount of

credits that may be awarded in a state fiscal year to \$5,000,000. **ISBA supports this bill.**

[HB 1266](#) **Education building and transportation authorities**; Author:

Representative Clere; Sponsor: Senator Donato. Requires the Department of Education to issue a request for information concerning the possible establishment of educational building authorities and educational transportation authorities that would operate K-12 school buildings, or other educational experience centers, and K-12 transportation respectively. Although only a study, **ISBA opposes this bill** as its theoretical underpinning calls for the removal of the oversight of governing bodies of school corporations and the duty of school administrators from managing school facilities and transportation. There is no evidence to believe a separate quasi-governmental entity created in each county can manage these aspects of K-12 education more efficiently and this would only increase government bureaucracy and inefficiencies. **Please call your state senator and ask that they oppose this bill!**

[SB 358](#) **Vacant or Underutilized School Buildings**; Author: Senator Rogers;

Sponsor: Rep. Behning. This bill requires school corporations to offer vacant and “underutilized” school buildings to charter schools for sale or lease for \$1. The definition of an underutilized building is generally a school building that is used at less than 50% of its capacity. Starting in the 2021-2022 school year, school corporations will have to report to the Department of Education the current use and current capacity of each of its buildings. The bill passed the Senate by a vote of 30-16 and has been assigned to the House Education Committee. **ISBA testified against the bill**, asserting that is unfair to taxpayers to give school buildings away and advising that the constitutionality of the current law is being litigated currently. School board members need to contact their legislators to discuss the impact this bill would have on your school corporation.

[HB 1384](#) **Civics Education**; Author: Representative Cook; Sponsor: Senator

Raatz. This bill establishes the Indiana civic education commission and charges the commission with making recommendations to the General Assembly, the State Board of Education, and the Department of Education regarding civics education.

The bill requires each school corporation, charter school, and state accredited nonpublic school to require each student in grade 6, 7, or 8 to successfully complete one semester of a civics education course. **ISBA testified in favor of the bill.**

CALL-TO-ACTION ALERT! House Bill 1005/SB 413

ISBA is partnering with IAPSS, IUSA, ISRSA, and the Coalition for Growing and Suburban Schools to ask every school board to adopt a resolution in opposition to HB 1005 and SB 413, the education savings accounts and school voucher expansion bills. Our goal is to get 100% of school boards to take this action. To find the model resolution prepared by ISBA for your use and to learn more about ISBA's advocacy campaign "ESA Is Not OK!", go to: <https://www.isba-ind.org/esa-is-not-ok.html>. If your board has adopted such a resolution, please send it to Adam VanOsdol at: avanosdol@isba-ind.org

Thank you to the ISBA members who have engaged in grassroots advocacy engagement. Your efforts locally have been impressive! Have a restful weekend.

Sincerely,



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