

# ISBA Legislative Priorities

## 2017 Legislative Session

**1. Raise the \$2,000,000 and \$10,000,000 thresholds for school construction projects before triggering a petition/remonstrance or a referendum. Project cost limits were established to protect tax payers. Unfortunately, those limits have never been updated/adjusted for inflation. (IC 6-1.1-20-1.1) (IC 6-1.1-20-3.1)**

Discussion:

*It has been 6 years since the \$2,000,000 and \$10,000,000 (petition/ remonstrance & referendum) trigger limits have been set. Inflation has eroded these limits to the point where almost any project triggers a petition/remonstrance or referendum in a school community.*

**2. Tax credits should be allowed for donations made to public schools and public school foundations.**

Discussion:

*Tax credits are already allowed for donations made to private schools and state universities...why not public schools and public school foundations?*

**3. a. Transportation – The protected tax levy statute, in relation to debt service fund property tax cap losses and their predicted impact on transportation operating funds, will cause significant school transportation fund losses. (IC 6-1.1-20.6-9.8)**

Discussion:

*IC 6-1.1-20.6-9.8 has been waived from implementation for four years because of the catastrophic impact it would have on transportation funds. It's time that it be corrected.*

**3. b. Transportation – Current law requires public schools to pick up private and charter school students that are located on current bus routes. Determining a safe drop-off point (as stated in current statute) will put many districts in an untenable legal position. (IC 20-27-11-1)**

Discussion:

*The current statute states "transportation provided under this section must be from the home of the nonpublic or charter school student or from a point on the regular route nearest or most easily accessible to the home of the nonpublic or charter school student to and from the nonpublic or charter school or to and from the point on the regular route that is nearest or most easily accessible to the nonpublic or charter school from which the student can walk to and from the nonpublic or charter school."*

**4. Capital Referendums - Allow truthful ballot language. (IC 6-1.1-20-3.6)**

Discussion:

*If a school corporation is paying off old debt, in order to neutralize the tax impact of a capital referendum, the school district should be allowed to state so on a referendum ballot. Currently, the school corporation can only state that it is raising taxes to execute a project. Placing inaccurate referendum language on ballots leaves the voter with a feeling that they were misled during campaigning. Additionally, a district should also have the ability to describe the proposed project on the ballot.*

**5. General Fund Referendums – Change the length of the GF referendum from 7 to 8 years and also allow the use of school facilities to advertise and answer questions about the referendum. (IC 6-1.1-20-10) (IC 6-1.1-20-10.1) (IC 20-46-1-11)**

Discussion:

*An 8 year GF referendum sequence would match the general election cycle. Schools are constantly criticized for not publicizing referendums adequately. Finding low cost and adequate meeting spaces becomes a problem for many communities – one that the use of school facilities could easily remedy.*

**6. Capital Projects Fund - Make permanent the ability to pay general fund utilities and property/casualty insurance from the CPF. Loss of this authority will have a negative financial impact on almost every school district. (IC 20-40-8-19)**

Discussion:

*Since 2001, in order to shore up support for dwindling school general funds, districts were allowed to pay a portion of their utilities and property/casualty insurance from their CPF. That portion is currently calculated by multiplying a district's 2005 state support by 3.5%. This is simply an allowance of some flexibility to transfer money between funds and does not have any financial impact on the State or on local taxpayers. Loss of this transfer allowance would cause schools to lose a total of \$109,000,000 in general fund revenue.*

**7. Redevelopment Commission Representation - School board representatives should have voting rights on redevelopment commissions. (IC 36-7-14-6.1)**

Discussion:

*Schools are one of the most important drivers of economic development in a community and should have an integral role in redevelopment commission planning strategies.*

**8. Collective Bargaining - Allow MOUs at any time during the year. If the board and exclusive representative agree to a mid-year contract adjustment, they should have the flexibility to do so (local control). (IC 20-29-6)**

Discussion:

*There are times during the school year that adjustments may need to be made to the contract. When the board and the teachers' representative are in agreement, adjustments should be allowed.*