

2019 ISTA Legislative Priorities

We need strong public schools, so every child has the chance to learn and succeed, regardless of where they live or how much money their parents make. This means we need to pay competitive wages to attract and retain high quality teachers. But right now, teacher salaries in Indiana are much lower than nearby states, and experienced teachers are leaving for better opportunities.

We spend a lower proportion of funds in the classroom than other states. We need to increase state funding for public schools in Indiana and require that a higher proportion of school funding be used on classroom instruction and educators' salaries than administration.

Improve Teacher Compensation and Advance the Teaching Profession

- Our elected leaders must declare teacher compensation a priority.
- Hoosier teacher salaries are last within our region (IL, KY, MI, OH and WI). We need action and funding that leads to competitive salaries within a reasonable amount of time.
- We need state budget policies that guide schools to become more efficient by prioritizing spending on classroom instruction and student achievement rather than administration.
- We need to explore more opportunities through pilot programs that address the career and pay advancement of classroom teachers so that we attract and retain the very best.
- We need to improve our teacher preparation through residency and other programs that provide the practical learning, hands-on experience and support network teachers need to be effective right away.

Restore Collective Bargaining

- Restrict schools from playing budget games during bargaining with teachers by limiting fund transfers and false claims of deficit financing.
- Eliminate state restrictions on health insurance bargaining.
- Uncouple teacher evaluation decisions from base salary calculations.
- Restore collective bargaining rights on the days and hours educators work.

Strengthen School Safety

- Invest in school counselors, psychologists and social workers.
- Require school buses to have stop-arm lights and cameras installed and implemented over a four-year period.
- Require all new bus purchases to include stop-arm lights and cameras.

Secure Retirees' Future

- Provide a true cost-of-living adjustment for retired educators until the new pre-funded mechanism, enacted in 2018, takes effect.



FURTHER PRIORITIES

Balance Teacher Evaluations

- Better balance the reliance of standardized test scores with more meaningful locally derived criteria, such as demonstrated knowledge of content and pedagogy and/or meeting locally derived instructional outcome goals.

Hold Charter and Virtual Schools Accountable

- Enact policies that hold charter and virtual charter schools to the same standards of traditional public schools.
- Require financial and policy transparency for all schools that receive state funding.

Focus on Trauma-Informed Care

- Fund an increased collection of Adverse Childhood Experiences scores for adults.
- Create an interim study committee to study districts (in state and out) that have implemented trauma-informed care and have worked with community partners to provide systems of care.
- Create safe and supportive school programs.

Eliminate Barriers to Dual-Credit Licensing

- Address existing barriers to dual licensure to ensure qualified teachers can continue to teach dual credit courses.

Improve Staff Trainings

- Combine and streamline certain state mandated trainings.

