

April 2025

ISTA LEGISLATIVE SUMMARY: 2025 SESSION



A comprehensive overview of education legislation considered by the 2025 Indiana General Assembly.



Indiana
State
Teachers
Association

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

While protecting K–12 education funding in the state budget was ISTA's top priority, many other important bills moved through the legislature this year. In a challenging political and fiscal environment, ISTA was able to advance and defend key priorities.

Thanks to our staff and your voice, we saw meaningful improvements to some bills and successfully blocked several proposals that would have negatively impacted public schools and educators. This session also brought some setbacks. We have work ahead of us.

Final Budget Outcome

Lawmakers finalized the two-year state budget in the early morning hours on the last day of the session after a tense week of negotiations following a revenue forecast projecting a \$2.4 billion shortfall. Even in a tight budget year, legislators kept K–12 tuition support largely intact, though many other areas of the budget, including higher education and state agencies, saw cuts.

The final budget includes:

- 2% annual increases in K–12 tuition support.
- \$160 million per year for curricular materials.
- A delayed voucher expansion, now scheduled for year two of the budget.
- No increase in funding for virtual schools (held at 85% of the foundation amount).

While we're encouraged that K–12 public schools were protected from deeper cuts, ISTA remains concerned about the continued expansion of private school vouchers, especially to families with the highest incomes, even as public schools educate over 90% of Indiana's students.

We will continue pressing lawmakers to invest in the schools that serve all students, and to prioritize policies that strengthen the teaching profession and restore respect for public education.

While this session did not deliver all the progress we hoped for, we are grateful for your continued engagement and commitment to public education. In an environment where forward movement is hard-won, your support helps keep our mission alive, and your voice will be even more important as we prepare for what comes next.

In solidarity,



Keith Gambill
ISTA President

ISTA LEGISLATIVE WINS AND SUCCESSES

In a session marked by continued threats to collective bargaining, teacher pay and public-school funding, ISTA members, advocates and staff stood together to protect hard-won rights and advance key priorities. While not every proposal could be stopped or improved, these legislative wins and successes reflect the power of collective advocacy in one of the most challenging political environments Indiana educators have faced.

DEFENSIVE SUCCESSES

Bills ISTA opposed that died or were significantly improved through amendment.

BILLS AMENDED TO REMOVE HARMFUL LANGUAGE

- **Collective Bargaining ISTA Member Rights**
 - NO bills filed during the session to prohibit collective bargaining, across the board.
 - Draft bills repealing all teacher collective bargaining were not filed.
 - Language in SB 373, later in a draft CCR for HB 1515, would have made teacher collective bargaining optional in mastery-based education pilots. This anti-collective bargaining language was removed on the last day of session due to ISTA advocacy and did not pass in any bill.
 - In SB 146, improvements were made for collective bargaining by removing language impacting bargaining health insurance plans (See SB 146 summary).
 - ISTA improved SB 249 by ensuring that the current experience and advanced degree attainment in establishing salary increases and increments remains at a 50% factor overall and by adding some degree of transparency to the process of using current revenue for supplemental payments made by districts by requiring the district to pass a resolution in an open meeting. This open meeting could provide a venue and opportunity to raise using available cash balances and/or rainy day funds for these payments rather than taking money off of the bargaining table.
- **HB 1002 – Deregulation**
 - ISTA successfully amended the bill to preserve the 12-month pay option for educators and other changes.
 - ISTA also restored language around Social-Emotional Learning, cultural competencies, Trauma-informed care and various behavioral assessments and services, particularly for special education students under Article 7 requirements.

- **HB 1515 – Omnibus Various Education Matters**
 - Avoided language that would have prohibited a school corporation from closing buildings for the purpose of teachers or other school employees attending a planned protest, demonstration and political advocacy event.
 - Under a new mastery pilot program, ISTA was able to remove the striking of certain Indiana statutes important for teacher salaries and contractual processes, including protecting teacher due process.
 - ISTA was able to improve the membership of the newly created Indianapolis Local Education Alliance by making the composition all local, with more proportionate representation from IPS.
- **HB 1531 – Reporting of Undocumented/ESL Students**
 - Originally required schools to report a student's immigration or English learner status.
 - **Result:** Language impacting K-12 schools was removed entirely through amendment.
- **HB 1285 – Special Education Cameras**
 - Included mandates for cameras in SPED and many other classrooms.
 - **Result:** Camera requirement language fully removed.
- **SB 1 – Property Taxes/Local Government Finance**
 - While the bill results in reductions to public school corporations and local units of government during a time of uncertain fiscal projections and a tight budget session, the final version did lessen the blow to public schools by reducing the potential losses from around \$2 billion over the next few years to around three-quarters of a billion across that same timeline – still a significant loss in potential growth but far less than the original proposal. The phase-in approach also allows more time for districts to adapt, albeit ISTA understands the struggle districts will face and will continue to closely monitor school finances going forward.

- **SB 146 –Teacher Compensation**
 - Originally weakened local bargaining, particularly with regard to bargaining health insurance, and incentivized merit pay.
 - **Result:** ISTA successfully pushed for major improvements:
 - Removed forced "cheapest plan" state health insurance language.
 - Removed performance-only TAG grant framework.
 - Restored paid parental leave but needed to come out in conference committee due to state fiscal outlook.
 - Increases annual teacher starting pay to \$45,000.
 - Requires schools to use a greater share of state funding on teacher pay (from 62% to 65% of tuition support).
- **SB 249 – Supplemental Pay and Salary Increases**
 - Originally:
 - Lowered the cap for pay increases for experience and advanced degrees from 50% to 40%.
 - Added high-needs areas as a standalone factor for salary increases.
 - Allowed all funds to be taken out of bargainable money.
 - **Result:** ISTA successfully restored the current 50% cap on experience and advanced degree attainment, listed high-needs areas along with "academic needs" instead of adding it as a standalone factor, and added the step of the school board passing a resolution concerning using revenue for supplemental pay adding transparency to this process.
- **SB 287 – Partisan School Boards**
 - Originally required all school board candidates to declare a political party and be nominated in the primary election.
 - **Result:** Candidates can display their party ID, or none, on the general election ballot.
- **SB 289 – Anti-DEI Bill**
 - Bill originally included restrictions on classroom instruction, but through an amendment, ISTA secured the right to teach certain topics.
 - **Result:** The bill was amended significantly in the House and in conference committee, with most K-12 references removed. At ISTA's request, significant and unreasonable fines/penalties for violations were also removed. The bill no longer closes DEI offices. Some staff training is still allowed if taken voluntarily.

- **SB 442 Human Sexuality Instruction (Sen. Gary Byrne; R-Byrneville)**
 - Restored language requiring the topic of sexual consent to be a required subject under human sexuality curricula. The bill had been previously changed to remove the teaching of consent through sex education programs.

PROACTIVE WINS

Legislation ISTA supported or influenced to include positive policy outcomes.

- **HB 1001 – Budget**
 - Despite a late-session revenue shortfall, the final state budget preserved year-over-year increases in K-12 tuition support—approximately 2% in FY26 and FY27—and maintained \$160 million annually to cover the cost of curricular materials. While the budget does not meet current inflationary needs, base foundation funding was largely protected while many other state programs and agencies saw cuts.
 - Responding to the April revenue forecast that identified a \$2+ billion gap in projected revenue over expenses:
 - Almost all of the categorical grant programs (outside of the formula) saw a slight decrease in year 1 of the biennium and then a slight increase in year 2;
 - Special Education, Complexity Index, Career and Technical Education, Academic Honors/Academic Performance, Non-English Speaking Programs (grants added to the funding formula) also generally saw a slight decrease in year 1 of the biennium and then a slight increase in year 2;
 - The Teacher Appreciation Grant was reduced on a statewide basis from \$37.5m each year to \$35.63m each year and was dramatically redesigned (see below).
 - The funding formula for HEA 1001, which estimates the year-over-year funding for Indiana's traditional public, charter (including virtual charter), and private school voucher schools over the next two years, can be found [here](#). Please know that state funding for schools is primarily a function of student enrollment counts, and therefore, actual funding will not be known until the student count date(s).
 - With regard to Indiana's funding of private/non-traditional public schools:
 - Income guidelines for vouchers were delayed until year 2 with a projected fiscal impact of about \$90M.

- Educational Savings Accounts (ESAs) and Career Savings Accounts (CSAs) did not see an increase in either year, and their administration is being transferred from the state treasurer's office to the IDOE in year 2.
- Virtual School Funding was straight-lined at 85% of base tuition support.
- The Charter and Innovation Network School Grant that funds property tax-like expenses for these schools was straight-lined for the next two years (note: charter school property tax sharing does not begin until 2028).
- Scholarship Granting Organizations (SGOs) retain their state tax credit.
- Private and homeschooling parents retain their tax deduction for unreimbursed educational expenditures.
- Voucher schools will receive a tuition support distribution twice a year (had been once a year).
- Other Notable K-12 Issues in HEA 1001:
 - The existing IDOE block grant, Freedom and Opportunity in Education Grant, of \$50M was straight-lined and redesigned to fund potentially other programs as determined by the IDOE.
 - The IDOE is to make recommendations to the General Assembly on aligning state funding for dual credit and the Advanced Placement program with the new high school diploma and on expanding access to dual credit to all Indiana students.
 - Special Education (S-5) maintained its existing funding for the biennium.
 - The State Board of Education's minimum meeting requirements transition from once a month to once a year.
 - The Governor's Workforce Cabinet is dissolved, and its duties transferred to the IDOE.
 - Funding for Adult Education Centers is straight-lined for the two years of the biennium, as are their student enrollment caps.
- **HB 1221 – TRF/PERF Pensions**
 - Provides for a 13th check stipend in 2025 for TRF and PERF retirees.
 - **Result:** A 13th check was in danger of ending this session but made it through the conference committee process.

- **HB 1498 – Accountability**

- ISTA has received assurances that educators' voices will be heard at the table during the next year of State Board of Education efforts to update the state's school accountability model. ISTA has already started a member workgroup on school accountability to provide the State Board of Education with recommendations this coming year.

BAD BILLS THAT DIED

- **HB 1136 – IPS Dissolution Bill**

- Would have dismantled Indianapolis Public Schools and transferred governance to state-run charters.
- **Result:** Bill stopped in committee due to strong opposition from ISTA and community partners.

- **HB 1394 – Enrollment Ban for Undocumented Students**

- Would have prohibited undocumented students from enrolling in public schools.
- **Result:** Died without a committee hearing.

- **HB 1500 – TAG Grants**

- Pieces of similar language ended up in HB 1001. However, some improvements were made with respect to the cost burden on districts and sustainability of supplemental incentive-based stipends.
- **Result:** Died in the Senate Education Committee.

- **SB 8 – School Referenda Restrictions (Senate version)**

- Would have made it harder for schools to pass referenda.
- **Result:** Died in Senate.

- **SB 9 and SB 315 – Property Tax/Finance Bills**

- Threatened to destabilize local school funding.
- **Result:** Both bills died.

- **SB 235 – Anti-DEI in Higher Education**

- Aimed to limit DEI programming at state institutions.
- **Result:** Died in the first half.

- **SB 257 – Civics Education**

- The bill contained some troubling language around requirements to support specific ideologies and beliefs about nationality and heritage, creating consequences around discrimination and potentially increased litigation costs. The bill resembled previous legislation around anti-CRT and other similar concepts.
- **Result:** Died in the Senate Education Committee.

- **SB 523 – School Chaplains**

- The bill would have sought school chaplains to solve the school counselor shortage by allowing schools to hire external chaplains to provide student counseling services. In addition to potential discrimination concerns around the religious backgrounds of chaplains and student populations, ISTA believes that this is not the answer to the shortage. Instead, the state must invest in meaningful funding to serve all Hoosier students.
- **Result:** Died in the House.

SCHOOL FUNDING PRIORITY ISSUES

SB 1: Property Tax Relief (Sen. Holdman; R-Markle)

SB 1 passed the Senate 37-10. Passed the House 65-29. The Senate concurred with House changes and passed narrowly 27-22. ISTA opposed the bill. Overall, the cuts to public schools were reduced from the original bill version.

Besides the homeowner property tax relief, the business personal property tax elimination, and other taxpayer relief provisions, the bill includes the following school-based provisions:

- The estimated net reduction in revenue (from what was estimated without SB 1) for school corporations is \$130.1M in CY 2026, \$146.8M in CY 2027, and \$266.9M in CY 2028. This is as far out in time as LSA can anticipate.
- The Maximum Levy Growth Ratio (MLGQ) for all taxing units is 4% (currently, this would have been 5.6% in CY 2026). Debt service and referendum funds are not subject to the MLGQ.
- Dissolves Union School Corporation in two years and sets up the transition provisions to effectuate the dissolution.
- Makes changes to ballot language for controlled projects, school operating, and school public safety referenda.
- Makes certain other restrictions on continuing referenda (timing issues) and threshold amounts used to determine whether a project is controlled.
- Makes changes to charter school laws concerning charter school closures.

- Sharing property taxes with certain charter schools:
 - Sharing property tax revenue does not apply when the number of kids is extremely small (the greater of 100 kids or 2% of the spring ADM of the district).
 - Sharing does not apply to debt service levies.
 - The four counties currently share continue until 2028 (Marion County, St. Joseph County, Vanderburgh County, and Lake County schools).
- Beginning in 2028, school districts begin sharing revenue from the district's operations fund levy with certain charter schools (based on the charter schools' pro rata share) under this phase-in schedule:
 - 25% of the share for the 2028 distribution.
 - 50% of the share for the 2029 distribution.
 - 75% of the share for the 2030 distribution.
 - 100% of the share beginning with the 2031 distribution and each year thereafter.
- Beginning in 2028, the law requires all districts that adopt a resolution for the first time to impose an operating referendum tax levy to begin sharing revenue from the district's operations fund.
- Beginning in 2028, it includes sharing with regard to referenda levies and school safety levies.
- Whenever a charter school takes property tax revenue, and regardless of whether the charter school is located in a county, city, or town, the county executive gets to appoint one individual to serve as a charter school board member.
- Charters will be under the same political campaign restrictions as traditional public schools.
- Charters can elect not to be a part of a referendum campaign.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATION LEGISLATION

SENATE BILLS

SB 146: Teacher Compensation (Sen. Linda Rogers; R-Granger)

Passed the Senate 50-0. Passed the House 90-1. Conference Committee Report adopted by the Senate 47-0 and the House 90-1.

ISTA supported the increases in pay and school expenditure thresholds for teacher salaries while recognizing that larger strides need to be made in future budgets to maintain a competitive teacher workforce amidst shortages and other challenges in Indiana.

The bill also contains several additional provisions:

- Creates the Indiana teacher recruitment program and fund.
- Removes a prohibition on ranking teacher preparation programs.
- Beginning June 30, 2025: (1) increases the minimum salary for a teacher employed by a school corporation to \$45,000 (current law requires \$40,000); and (2) requires a school corporation to expend an amount for teacher compensation that is not less than 65% of state tuition support (current law requires 62%).
- The teacher mobility contract language was removed in conference committee.
- Paid parental leave provisions were also removed in conference committee due to the tight budget and fiscal costs, but they hope to address the idea in future years.

SB 249: Teacher Compensation (Sen. Spencer Deery; R-West Lafayette)

Passed the Senate 39-10. Passed the House 65-29. The Senate concurred 34-14. This bill would have initially reduced the 50% threshold factor to 40%, which existing contracts currently employ for building salary plans, and added a new 10% factor around high-needs areas. ISTA was able to restore the 50% factor. The bill adds a 10% factor to the high-needs areas.

Additionally, ISTA supported an amendment requiring a local school board resolution to use education fund dollars off the top for supplemental pay to certain eligible teachers. A local board resolution must be passed in an open committee with public transparency. While not a complete fix, this was a positive first move away from taking dollars off the bargaining table automatically and potentially highlights local action to be taken to first use reserve funds (cash balance, rainy-day surpluses) to fund supplements.

SB 255: Education Matters (Sen. Spencer Deery; R-West Lafayette)

Passed the Senate 49-0. Passed the House 94-0. Conference Committee Report adopted by the Senate 32-12 and the House 65-25.

- Requires the Department of Education to grant an initial practitioner license to an individual who holds a bachelor's degree with a major in any combination of science, technology, engineering, or mathematics and completes a total of at least nine academic credits regarding certain instruction in teaching; and meets other specified requirements.

- Requires a principal to allow a student enrolled in a public secondary school to receive religious instruction for periods that do not exceed the amount of time equivalent to attending one elective course at the public secondary school during the week. Religious institutions that provide transportation to students must undergo background checks.
- Changes certain requirements regarding reporting a bullying "incident" to reporting a bullying "investigation".
- Requires discipline rules to include a provision to make a reasonable attempt to notify both the parent of a targeted student and the parent of an alleged perpetrator that the school is investigating a possible incident of bullying before the end of the next calendar day after which the school is made aware of the possible incident of bullying. ISTA is neutral on this bill.

SB 287: Partisan School Board Elections (Sen. Gary Byrne; Byrneville)

Passed the Senate 26-20. Passed the House 54-40. Senate concurred 26-24. ISTA opposed the bill entirely.

Provisions include:

- Requires a petition of nomination for a school board office to state one of the following: (1) The candidate's political party affiliation. (2) That the candidate is an independent candidate. (3) That the candidate elects not to disclose any affiliation with a political party or that the candidate is not affiliated with a political party and does not identify as an independent candidate.
- Specifies that unless a candidate who states a political party affiliation is challenged, the candidate's statement must be indicated on the ballot.
- Provides that the name of a candidate for school board office who does not run in affiliation with a political party or as an independent candidate must be printed with a blank space after the candidate's name signifying that the candidate elects not to disclose any affiliation with a political party or that the candidate is not affiliated with a political party and does not identify as an independent candidate.
- Specifies that a straight party vote does not count for any candidate for a school board office.
- Requires a school board vacancy to be filled by: (1) a caucus if the vacating member stated an affiliation with a major political party; and (2) the remaining members of the governing body if the vacating member did not state an affiliation with a major political party.
- Modifies the annual amount that the governing body of a school corporation may pay a member of the governing body from \$2,000 currently to an amount not to exceed 10% of the lowest starting salary of a teacher employed by the school corporation.

SB 289: Unlawful Discrimination (Sen. Gary Byrne; R-Byrneville)

Passed the Senate 34-13. The bill passed the House 67-27. The House concurred 64-26 and the Senate 34-16. ISTA appreciates the work on the bill during the legislative process, which has made significant improvements.

ISTA supported the amendment incorporated into the bill by minimizing the impact on K-12 schools and removing much of the original language that would have required public posting of instructional materials (similarly to previous session bills). The bill also no longer restricts classroom instruction or discussion topics. It no longer closes DEI offices but rather prohibits hiring and firing, enrollment, and licensure based on personal characteristics, as defined in Indiana civil rights law. Language was amended to protect teaching instruction of certain subjects.

Language was also included to protect several existing minority teaching scholarships the state offers. However, the scholarships are focused on candidates from a limited list of counties considered high-needs areas for minority teachers. ISTA opposed a section of the bill that would have imposed disproportionate fines and penalties for violations that schools could incur over any lawsuit that may arise over alleged violations. These harsh penalties could have led to a silencing of certain free speech. However, the fines and damages section was removed in conference committee.

This bill was also drastically amended in a previous committee, which strips out most of the original version's provisions. The final bill includes the following:

- Repeals provisions requiring university diversity committees.
- Prohibits unlawful discrimination in education, public employment, and licensure.
- Allows participation in public contracts by a minority business enterprise, women's business enterprise, and veteran business enterprise, as currently authorized by law. Permits scholarships based on a personal characteristic of the recipient if the scholarship is not funded by state funds or resources.
- Prohibits requiring as a condition of licensure that a person affirm that a person with a specific personal characteristic: (1) is inherently superior or inferior to a person with a different personal characteristic; (2) should be blamed for actions committed in the past; or (3) has a moral character that is determined by a personal characteristic of the person.
- Prohibits a public employer from requiring training asserting that, or implementing the theory that, a person with a certain personal characteristic is inherently superior or inferior to a person with a different personal

characteristic, should be blamed for actions committed in the past, or has a moral character that is determined by a personal characteristic of the person.

- Note: personal characteristics are race, religion, color, sex, national origin, or ancestry.

SB 358: Various Education Matters (Sen. Jeff Raatz; R-Richmond)

Passed the Senate 39-10. Passed the House 90-0. Conference Committee Report adopted 58-28 in the House and 37-12 in the Senate. ISTA was neutral.

The final bill includes provisions that:

- Requires the IDOE to evaluate, approve and publish a list of high-quality curricular materials for use in English/language arts and collaborate with teachers in evaluating and approving the English/language arts curricular materials. The evaluation process for certain curricular materials must include the age appropriateness of the content.
- Specifies that the curriculum used by a school in which fewer than 70% of students achieved a valid passing score on the determinant evaluation of reading skills must be age-appropriate.
- Requires, subject to available funding, certain schools to participate in the Indiana literacy cadre.
- Amends the "eligible school" definition for the choice scholarship program.
- Provides that a parent who is an education scholarship account (ESA) participating entity and teaches a course or program only to an eligible student who is the parent's child and does not teach a course or program to any other eligible student may not submit a claim for reimbursement of an ESA qualified expense of tuition and fees to teach the parent's child.
- Establishes penalties for certain violations by an ESA participating entity.

SB 365: Education Matters (Sen. Jeff Raatz; R-Richmond)

Passed the Senate 49-0. Passed the House 64-24. The Senate concurred 37-1 with House amendments. ISTA was neutral.

This omnibus bill was amended during the process and contains the following final provisions:

- Requires the IDOE to work with the Management Performance Hub (MPH) – a statewide data collection office – to publish workforce and other data in one centralized site.
- Requires the IDOE to administer and implement the comprehensive career navigation and coaching system developed by the Commission for Higher Education and administer the career coaching grant fund.

- Requires the IDOE to prepare a report on career coaching and submit it to the governor and general assembly.
- Requires the Department of Workforce Development to update wage threshold data to categorize career and technical education programs for the subsequent school year.

SB 366: Education Matters (Sen. Linda Rogers; R-Granger)

Passed Senate 30-16. Passed the House 63-27. The Senate concurred 29-17 after the bill failed on concurrence for a lack of constitutional majority vote.

ISTA opposed some original bill provisions, specifically the removal of evaluations from discussion with superintendents and the removal of committee appointments. ISTA was able to restore the required discussion on teacher evaluations. However, ISTA did oppose the removal of locals' ability to appoint a certain number of members to school committees.

The IDOE must submit a report to the General Assembly concerning school bus driver safety training no later than October 1, 2025.

- Makes certain changes concerning the process of filling a school board vacancy.
- Provides that a superintendent is preferred (current law says required) to hold a master's degree from certain institutions.
- Provides that certain covered school buildings are not required to revert to a school corporation if they are subject to ongoing renovations.
- Repeals certain school transfer requirements.
- Maintains a requirement that a superintendent must discuss a plan for annual performance evaluations with a teacher.
- It removes the option for an exclusive representative to appoint a certain number of teachers to school committees based on their district membership percentage.

SB 373: IDOE Agency Bill (Sen. Jeff Raatz, R – Richmond) – SEE HB 1515

Passed the Senate 49-0. Passed the House 76-20. Conference Committee Report adopted 91-0 in the House and 31-19 in the Senate.

After ISTA's position was neutral on the bill as introduced, with support for some provisions, two negative committee amendments were incorporated into the bill by the House, and ISTA's position was changed to oppose. However, this language was removed from the bill in conference committee and remained a straightforward IDOE agency bill with several miscellaneous provisions. ISTA's final position (with the negative language amended out) was neutral on the bill.

Numerous bill provisions include:

- Provides that the IDOE is the proper authority to accept federal funds appropriated to aid in the education of children with disabilities (current law provides that the state board of education is the proper authority)
- Removes the member of the Indiana Transportation Association from the list of nonvoting members on the state school bus committee.
- Provides that an individual seeking an initial practitioner's license through an alternative certification path must successfully complete an applicable teacher licensing exam as approved by the SBOE (current law requires the successful completion of a Praxis Subject Assessment).
- Provides that summer school funding may be differentiated based on the course or the length of the program.
- Moves the establishment of the division of special education from the SBOE to the IDOE.
- Changes certain duties for the Secretary of Education and the Director of Special Education.
- Provides that the department may suspend or terminate the certification of a scholarship-granting organization if the department establishes that the organization has not granted a scholarship within certain time frames (Restored in CCR from Senate version).

SB 442: Human Sexuality Instruction (Sen. Gary Byrne; R-Byrneville)

Passed the Senate 39-9. Passed the House 76-19. Conference Committee Report adopted 72-20 in the House and 35-12 in the Senate.

The bill mostly grants school boards local control over sexual instruction curricula. A troubling last-minute change in conference committee removed the discussion of sexual consent from the list of required topics, but this language was resolved before the final report being voted upon. ISTA appreciates the restoration of sexual consent as a required topic.

The bill provides that if a school instructs students concerning human sexuality, the school's governing authority must first approve and publish certain information concerning the instruction in a conspicuous place on the school's website, providing a direct link to that information in the school's written request for consent for instruction concerning human sexuality.

- Prohibits a school from using learning materials that concern human sexuality unless approved by the school's governing authority.
- Requires the governing body of a school to establish and maintain a grievance procedure for a violation of certain provisions.

- Provides that, if a school provides instruction on human sexuality or sexually transmitted infections, the instruction must include instruction concerning consent to sexual activity and a presentation on human growth and development during pregnancy.
- Requires a school corporation to include certain information concerning instruction on human sexuality in the written consent forms provided to a student's parent or a student, if the student is an adult or an emancipated minor, before the student may receive instruction on human sexuality.
- Requires the school board to publish a list of materials used in connection with instruction on human sexuality on the school's website and to include a link to the list of materials on electronically formatted written consent forms.
- Replaces references to "sexually transmitted diseases" with "sexually transmitted infections" to reflect more current terminology.

SB 448: Higher Education and Workforce Matters (Sen. Greg Goode; R-Terre Haute)

Passed the Senate 48-1. Passed the House 75-21. The Senate concurred 39-3. ISTA was neutral.

- Establishes additional duties for the governor's workforce cabinet and requires the cabinet to perform certain duties jointly with other state agencies. Note: The workforce cabinet was dissolved in HB 1001.
- Requires the Indiana management performance hub, in collaboration with the Department of Education and Commission for Higher Education to: (1) collect and compile certain student income data; and (2) compile into a data product on the Department's and Commission's websites certain data.
- Requires the Secretary of Education to establish a plan to develop a market-driven, stackable credentials and qualifications framework and submit the plan to the General Assembly.
- Provides that the commission shall (instead of may) approve or disapprove certain branches, campuses, centers, new colleges, new schools, degrees, or programs.
- Provides that before the Commission approves or disapproves a degree or program, a state educational institution shall provide, and the Commission shall consider, certain information regarding the degree or program.
- Requires the commission to: (1) review each degree or program for approval or disapproval at least one time every 10 years; (2) outline a process for degree and program monitoring, improvement, suspension, and closure; (3) publish certain information; and (4) take official action regarding the approval or disapproval of certain requests within 90 days.

- Requires a state educational institution to approve admission for Indiana residents who meet certain requirements.

Requires the board of trustees of a state educational institution to do the following: (1) When reviewing tenured faculty members, assess and review the staffing needs of the institution based on the branches, campuses, extension centers, colleges, schools, and degree and programs of the institution. (2) Submit any review of, renewal of, or amendment to the process or criteria regarding the tenured faculty member review to the commission.

- Requires the commission to promptly review the process and criteria and provide feedback to a board of trustees.
- Requires the Commission to prepare and submit an annual report to the legislative council regarding certain student enrollment data. Adds duties for the Department of Workforce Development.

SB 482: Chronic Absenteeism (Sen. Stacy Donato; R-Logansport)

Passed the Senate 49-0. Passed the House 82-15. Conference Committee Report was adopted 84-8 in the House and 48-2 in the Senate. ISTA supported the bill with additional recommendations.

The bill does the following:

- The bill follows up on last session's bill by requiring the IDOE to establish a distinction between excused and unexcused absences.
- The bill allows the IDOE to collect some student data around reasons for school absences.
- It allows the IDOE to submit a report with collected data and requires the local school board to have an absence policy. The policy adopted and submitted to the IDOE must categorize absence reasons.
- Allows the prosecuting attorney to have intervention meetings prior to filing with the court regarding a truancy case.
- Extends an absent student's mandatory student conference period to 10 days from 5 days.
- Prohibits mandatory expulsion for a student who has been expelled for absences. In other words, bans the use of exclusionary discipline in cases of absence policies.
- It sets an expiration date for when a student can be expelled or suspended solely for attendance reasons. The expiration date is July 31, 2026.
- Adds a list of IDOE best practices around student discipline and absenteeism.

HOUSE BILLS

HB 1002: Various Matters/Deregulation (Rep. Bob Behning, R-Indianapolis)

Passed the House 75-16. Passed the Senate 31-18. Conference Committee Report adopted by the House 61-25 and the Senate 27-21.

ISTA supported the idea of some deregulation efforts and remained neutral on the bill after the harmful provisions were deleted from the final bill. However, ISTA had some remaining concerns and will work as these changes are implemented across local districts.

This was a massive bill that covered a lot of statutory territory. Its intent is to remove obsolete laws or those perceived as hindering the core mission of public education. As with many omnibus bills, the value of deregulation is subjective. ISTA worked to remove some of the most egregious changes, including the repeal of the wage payment law.

ISTA also worked to restore most of the language requiring schools to provide important student services and teacher preparation in areas such as Social-Emotional Learning, Trauma-Informed Care, and certain special education student assessments around behavioral supports and services and culturally responsive instruction. Language was also added to ensure compliance with Article 7 protections for special education students. These programs would no longer have been required under a previous version of the bill.

A late addition to the bill on the final day of session ends the requirement for high schools to offer at least one semester of an elective racial or ethnic studies course per school year. The change came at the request from the IDOE due to a requirement from the U.S. Department of Education for states to certify they aren't participating in diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

HB 1002 is a very lengthy omnibus bill with numerous separate provisions that removes a wide range of laws from state code. Most of these repeals in this large-scale deregulation effort are minor in nature. However, the final bill does have some remaining concerns that may need to be addressed locally as school corporations implement changes.

HB 1016: School Safety Commission (Rep. Matt Commons; R-Williamsport)

Passed the House 91-0. Passed the Senate 46-0. ISTA supported.

This simple bill appoints a fire chief or their designee to the School Safety Commission.

HB 1064: School Athletic Events (Rep. Cory Criswell; R-Middletown)

Passed the House 67-25. Passed the Senate 30-19. ISTA supported the original bill but changed position to neutral/stayed out after the cash payment section was removed. ISTA was not supportive of the transfer language regarding athletes.

HB 1064 originally was a straightforward bill that required a school corporation to offer a cash payment option at athletic events for sales of concessions and goods beginning July 1, 2025. This language was later removed entirely, and the bill shifted more to legislation around student transfers, adding a provision allowing school choice students to transfer specifically for purposes of athletics. Transfers based on athletic reasons alone are problematic, with a history of incidents around shopping around for sports opportunities.

HB 1102: Contracting for Preschool (Commons; R-Williamsport)

Passed the House 91-0. Passed the Senate 49-0. ISTA was neutral on the bill but supports the expansion of Pre-K opportunities for Hoosier kids, which the bill has made small strides toward.

- Removes language restricting school corporations from entering into a contract with a religiously affiliated nonprofit preschool program.

HB 1134: Executive Sessions (Rep. Ben Smaltz; R-Auburn)

Passed the House 91-4. Passed the Senate 47-1. The House concurred 67-13. ISTA was neutral on the bill.

Allows meetings of a state or local agency governing body concerning the following topics to be held in the executive session:

1. Employee health care options with respect to special exceptions to coverage.
2. Employee handbook changes.
3. Review of negotiations on the performance of publicly bid contracts, when public knowledge may result in increased cost.
4. Solicitation of contract proposals containing a bidder's proprietary information.
5. Requires a teacher's electronic mail address to be used for sending the annual summary of a teacher's rights and protections.

HB 1220: Attorney General's Office (Rep. Mike Karickhoff; R-Kokomo)

Passed the House 91-0. Passed the Senate 45-2. ISTA was neutral.

Requires a teacher's electronic mail address to be used for sending the annual summary of a teacher's rights and protections (current requirement is the notice be sent by U.S. mail).

HB 1221: Pensions/13th Check (Rep. Mike Karickhoff; R-Kokomo)

Passed the House 89-0 and passed the Senate 46-3. Conference Committee Report adopted by the House 90-0 and the Senate 39-11. ISTA supported HB 1221 and continues to support the 13th check stipend and additional post-retirement benefits for TRF and PERF retirees.

- Amends provisions regarding the surcharge rates established by the board of trustees of the Indiana Public Retirement System to actuarially pre-fund certain post retirement benefits.
- Adds provisions to require the state treasurer to determine a surcharge amount to be paid into the supplemental reserve account for the state police pre-1987 and 1987 benefit systems.
- The bill restores a 13th check for retirees for the next year at a 5 percent reduction from traditional scaled stipend amounts based on years of service.

HB 1285: Special Education (Rep. Becky Cash; R-Zionsville)

Passed the House 90-0. Passed the Senate 46-1. ISTA was neutral since the costly classroom camera language, which also had significant privacy and legal concerns, was removed.

As introduced, this bill:

1. Established the special education classroom grant program to assist school corporations in complying with certain camera-in-classrooms requirements;
2. Required school corporations to have electronic recording equipment in each designated special education classroom, seclusion area, sensory room, and time-out area not later than January 1, 2026; and
3. Each school corporation is required to have a trained behavioral interventionist on school grounds.

However, all of these provisions were removed by the committee. As amended, this bill requires:

1. School corporations are to provide the parents of a student with the opportunity to collect the student's property under certain conditions.
2. School corporations to allow a parent of a student to record a meeting concerning the student's individualized education program.
3. The IDOE to review nonviolent crisis intervention training programs and make recommendations to school corporations.

4. School corporations have at least one employee present in each school building who has obtained nonviolent training who is available for de-escalation responses, including responses to any use of chemical or mechanical restraints, seclusion or time-outs.

HB 1348: Nonaccredited Schools (Rep. Tim Wesco; R-Osceola)

Passed the House 62-29. Passed the Senate 32-15. ISTA did not get directly involved with this bill, but opposed the watering down of diplomas.

- Provides that a high school diploma or credential issued by a non-accredited nonpublic school is legally sufficient to demonstrate that the recipient has met the requirements to complete high school.
- Prohibits a state or local agency or institution of higher education in Indiana from rejecting or otherwise treating a person differently based solely on the source of a diploma or credential.
- Provides that a person who administers a school has the authority to execute any document required by law, rule, regulation, or policy to provide certain evidence regarding a child's education.

HB 1376: Overdose Medication in Schools (Rep. Pat Boy; D-Michigan City)

Passed the House 91-0. Passed the Senate 49-0. ISTA supported measures to improve student health and safety.

The bill amends the definition of emergency medication and provides more steps to ensure student safety in situations of overdose.

HB 1427: Department of Local Government and Finance (Rep. Craig Snow; R-Warsaw)

Passed the House 89-1. Passed the Senate 41-8. Conference Committee Report adopted by the House 68-23 and the Senate 37-13. ISTA was neutral on the final version.

This sizable omnibus bill includes a wide array of local tax and local government finance provisions. However, there are a few sections that impact school corporations:

1. Specifies that certain school corporation property tax referenda are eligible to be on the ballot in the 2025 fall election.
2. Requires charter school administrators to provide certain financial information in the name of some added accountability (language originally from SB 403).

3. In the case of a school corporation with territory in more than one county, the governing body may impose the property tax levy under this section only on real and personal property in the school corporation's territory located in the county. The property tax rate and levy imposed must be certified by the Department of Local Government Finance and are not considered part of the maximum permissible property tax levy under IC 20-46-8-1 for the school corporation's operations fund.
 - Currently, the IPS school district or any school corporation in a county having a population of more than 400,000 and less than 700,000 may annual appropriate sums to be paid to cultural institutions that are reasonably commensurate with the educational and cultural contributions made by the institutions to the school district and the school district's students. HEA 1427 changes the population parameters connected to this law to any school district in a county having a population of more than 175,000 and less than 700,000 – thereby including many more school districts eligible under this law.
 - New provisions in this law permits an eligible school district to impose a property tax of not more than five-tenths of one cent (\$0.005) on each \$100 of assessed valuation in the school district to deposit into a cultural institution fund separate and district from the district's operation and education funds and may only be used for a cultural institution under this law. There are conditions, including public transparency provisions, under which these arrangements can be made.
4. It allows certain access to financial data requirements for charter schools, offering an extra layer of fiscal transparency. ISTA still proposes numerous suggestions on improving charter school accountability, both fiscally and performance-based.

HB 1498: School Accountability (Rep. Bob Behning; R-Indianapolis)

Passed the House 62-28. Passed the Senate 43-4. The House concurred 65-25. ISTA has supported multiple measures and the state board dashboard; ISTA continues to oppose punitive A-F grade labeling kids, educators, schools and communities.

The bill requires the State Board of Education to develop an updated school accountability system that utilizes designated categories (such as A-F letter grades currently in state statute or another grading model). The new accountability system must align with the recently adopted graduation requirements and diplomas.

An amendment passed by consent removes a provision requiring the Department of Education's school performance methodology to include a high school graduation on-track indicator for high schools.

ISTA will continue working on this effort around accountability post-session for the next year through the State Board of Education.

HB 1499: Literacy (Rep. Robert Behning; R-Indianapolis)

Passed the House 95-0. Passed the Senate 46-1. The House concurred 90-0. ISTA was neutral on the bill.

As the amended bill finally landed, it includes the following provisions:

1. Provides that certain students have the opportunity to retake the determinant evaluation of reading skills at least twice in the summer before grade 3 retention requirements apply.
2. Requires the IDOE to establish a registration process to exempt a school with a student population comprising at least 50% multilingual learners from compliance with the determinative evaluation. Sunsets this provision July 1, 2028.
3. Added language to permit a school to satisfy Indiana's career fair requirement by holding a career fair that is not on school property if transportation is provided to all students.
4. Under the EARN (Employment Aid and Readiness Network) Indiana Work Study Program, the minimum average number of hours a student must be employed is reduced from 12 to 10 per week.

HB 1515: Education and Higher Education Matters (Rep. Bob Behning; R-Indianapolis)

Passed the House 57-28. Passed the Senate 32-16. Conference Committee Report was adopted by the House 62-30 and the Senate 28-22. ISTA was neutral on the original bill but opposed the changes that: 1) limit collective bargaining rights; and 2) divert funds through transportation and facility sharing from community-based public schools to charter schools. The bargaining language was removed, but the transportation/facility pilot program remains.

This omnibus bill contains multiple separate provisions. The original bill consisted of various IDOE issues that ended up in the final version including:

- Allows accredited non-public schools to establish a school police department.
- Allows accredited nonpublic schools to participate in the principal institute.
- Allows accredited nonpublic schools and charter schools to participate in STEM Teacher Grants.
- Establishes, for three school years a centralized school facilities pilot program and a student transportation pilot program.
- Establishes a mastery-based education pilot program administered by the IDOE.
- Establishes the Indianapolis local education alliance and requires the alliance to conduct a school facilities assessment and establish a school facilities and transportation implementation plan.
- Allows a school choice parent to petition the IDOE for reconsideration of choice eligibility if there is reason to believe the student was determined ineligible due to enrollment data error (technical change).
- Provides that a student must be withdrawn from enrollment in a school corporation's virtual education program if the student accumulates 10 consecutive or 18 cumulative unexcused absences (instead of the number of unexcused absences sufficient to result in the student's classification as a habitual truant).
- Amends eligibility requirements for the high-value workforce ready credit-bearing grant.
- Establishes the county deputy prosecuting attorney and public defender scholarship program and funds.
- Provides that a charter school is a permitted use in all zoning districts and a charter school's land use application must be processed by a unit on a priority basis.
- Includes language that grants the Vigo County Council oversight of certain use of funds.
- Requires certain individuals and certain schools to ensure that an AED is operational and present at certain events, and that individuals present at certain events are aware of the location of the AED and emergency plans regarding the use of the AED. Adds a requirement regarding certain school emergency action plans for sudden cardiac arrest.
- Removes certain sudden cardiac arrest training and certificate of completion requirements.
- Requires additional admissions requirements for certain Indiana Medical School programs.
- Requires a school to provide public notice to parents around certain unsubstantiated or substantiated actions.
- Requires the IDOE to submit a report to the General Assembly on the academic readiness of students who enroll in a virtual school or program.

- Requires the state board to adopt rules regarding financial reporting and oversight required by a school corporation and a vendor who enter into or renew a contract relating to the operation of a dedicated virtual school.

Additionally, through the legislative amendment process, the bill became a vehicle for two separate provisions ISTA opposed (inserted initially into SB 373 through a committee amendment and later moved to HB 1515).

However, the anti-collective bargaining language that would have rendered bargaining optional in participating pilot districts under a new mastery-based education program was removed from the final conference committee report. This is a significant win that ISTA fought strongly to remove from the bill.

The bill also establishes a new pilot program allowing districts to voluntarily transfer control of school facilities and transportation services to newly created local boards. Local boards would not have taxing authority for levies. The bill also would create the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance, an advisory group tasked with developing recommendations for how IPS and local charter schools could share resources like buildings and bus systems. The local alliance would include appointed seats by the Indianapolis mayor and IPS.

Another House floor amendment was offered (but did not pass) that would have prohibited a school corporation from closing a school or holding a virtual instruction day due to any planned or coordinated absence of teachers or school staff to participate in a protest, demonstration or political advocacy event. The amendment was withdrawn, but it was clearly a response to ISTA's Day of Action.

HB 1634: Math Education (Rep. Jake Teshka; R-South Bend)

Passed the House 90-0. Passed the Senate 38-11. The House concurred 91-0. ISTA was neutral since it does not *require* new "Science of Math" trainings.

1. Requires teacher preparation programs to align their foundation skills math curriculum with evidence-based instructional strategies that promote conceptual understanding, procedural fluency, and real-world problem solving and if the IDOE determines in its accreditation process that the teacher preparation program is noncompliant (after a review process under current law), the IDOE must revoke the teacher preparation program's right to use "accredited" in its description.
2. Requires each school corporation and charter middle school to automatically enroll a student who scores "above proficient" on the ILEARN assessment for math in grades 5, 6, or 7, and earns at least a "C" or higher in the student's math course in a middle school advanced math course.

3. It requires each school to notify parents of automatic enrollment and permits a student's parent to opt out of automatic enrollment.
4. This section provides that a school shall administer math screeners approved by the IDOE (instead of a state-approved numeracy screener) for certain students.
5. Beginning with the 2026-27 school year, and applicable to all public schools, charter schools, accredited nonpublic schools, and other scholarship-granting organization schools, requires each of these schools to administer to all K - 2 grade students a numeracy screener to identify students at risk of not meeting grade-level proficiency.
 1. A school must provide interventions that meet specific requirements for students not achieving proficiency.
6. There is no reference to teacher professional development, additional endorsements, or testing.

HB 1637: School Safety (Rep. Stephen Bartels; R-Eckerty)

Passed the House 94-0. Passed the Senate 49-0. Conference Committee Report was adopted by the House 93-0 and the Senate 50-0. ISTA supported school safety measures as the most basic starting point for a positive learning environment.

- Provides for the appointment of a fire chief, or the fire chief's designee, to a county school safety commission.
- Establishes the office of school safety within the Department of Homeland Security to coordinate and administer school security and safety resources.
- This law requires a school corporation or charter school to comply with certain safety-related requests by the Office of School Safety.
- Changes the composition of the secured school safety board.
- Provides that the secured school fund may be used to provide financial assistance for projects of the Office of School Safety that are approved by the Secured School Safety Board.
- Requires a school safety plan to include measures to inspect each protective door assembly on school buildings annually to ensure compliance with standards established by the Fire Prevention and Building Safety Commission.
- Authorizes the department to issue enforcement orders in accordance with rules adopted by the board of firefighting personnel standards and education.
- Provides that the department, fire department, or volunteer fire department may open burn for fire training purposes under certain conditions.
- Requires that a city, town, or county that requires a building permit for the construction of a Class 2 structure allow the inspection to be conducted by third-party inspectors.

- Amends the definition of "law enforcement officer" to include the state fire marshal and the department's executive director or fire investigator. Provides that the Fire Prevention and Building Safety Commission, with certain exceptions, may not adopt a final rule for more than three building codes during any 12 months.
- Repeals the provision establishing the Department of Education's Division of School Building Physical Security and Safety.

HB 1660: Excused Absences (Rep. Beau Baird; R-Greencastle)

Passed the House 90-0. Passed the Senate 45-2. ISTA was neutral on the bill.

- Provides that the governing body of a school corporation or the chief administrative officer of a nonpublic school system shall authorize the absence and excuse of a school student if the student participates in certain events offered by the National FFA Organization, the Indiana FFA Association, or a 4-H club.
- Provides that a student's excused absence may not exceed six days in a school year.
- Provides that the student must be in good academic standing.