

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, Feb. 20

To: All members

This week marks the final week for committee hearings for the 2026 legislative session. Any bill that did not receive a hearing during this second half of session is considered technically dead, although language could return and be reinserted into bills going to conference committee. Both the House and Senate will have multiple education bills to amend and vote. Concurrently, conference committees will ramp up next week prior to the final Sine Die on February 27. There are still several steps remaining to impact ISTA's key concerns around a few bills.

HB 1004 passed out of the Senate Appropriations this week and will move to the Senate floor. ISTA is utilizing several strategies to remove a section of the bill dealing with teacher contract hours. As a reminder from previous weeks, HB 1004 is an omnibus deregulation bill that deletes hundreds of provisions from Indiana statute. The bill removes the number of hours per day that a teacher is expected to work from the regular teacher contract. Teachers already work well beyond the school day whether in volunteering for school events, grading assignments outside of the school day, responding to parents and students along with many other duties. They perform their professional roles without complaint. Teachers deserve at minimum to know clearly what the hour expectations are in the contract. It is a simple matter of professional respect. Amendments to remove the hours language did not pass in committee. However, ISTA continues to work on this key issue of the bill.

HB 1423 also passed out of Senate Appropriations. While a few amendments have improved the bill, ISTA still opposes the legislation on the basis that it removes an elected school board that is publicly accountable to taxpayers and local community members and replaces it with a fully appointed board by the mayor of Indianapolis. The bill also shifts several major authorities to this newly appointed board, including transportation, facilities and performance metrics. Some amendments did make positive steps in the bill, including an opt-out both for traditional public schools and charter schools within IPS with respect to facilities. The board appointment terms have also been reduced from six years to four years. While the board will be created in the shorter term, implementation of the transportation and facilities aspects will be delayed until the 2028-29 school year. The bill will move to the Senate floor for amendments and a vote and may go to conference committee due to the numerous changes made through the process.

The large and far-reaching immigration bill, **SB 76**, passed the House last week and was scheduled all week for a final concurrence vote in the Senate, but did not get called for a vote. We expect the bill to move next week. See our call to action below. The bill includes language that negatively impacts both K-12 schools and higher education institutions. The bill requires schools, universities, courts, jails, and any other governmental bodies to comply fully with ICE or face a \$10,000 fine. Further, the bill includes university police along with hospital police and school resource officers as agents of immigration enforcement. ISTA, along with various coalition partners, continue to fight against this bill. ISTA pushed amendments to remove the language of the bill that ties in public schools. Schools must remain safe places for student learning, not another venue where ICE can remove kids. Should the bill pass, it faces potential legal challenges.

A few additional charter school bills on top of HB 1423 have also passed out of committees. [HB 1176](#) and [SB 239](#) both seek to expand charter options among districts. ISTA continues to oppose bills that divert public tax dollars away from community-based public schools. HB 1176 passed the Senate, and SB 239 passed out of the House Education Committee this week. Although both bills establish a voluntary and optional process for school districts to convert a traditional public school into a charter, ISTA opposes legislative efforts to favor the growing list of privatized school models at the expense of community-based public schools that serve over 90 percent of Hoosier students. Since SB 239 and HB 1176 contain similar language around charter expansion, the bills could be merged or amended in conference committee.

ISTA additionally continues to work on **SB 204** – a bill that makes changes to teacher stipends, supplements and increments. This is another version of differentiated pay that the legislature takes up nearly every session now in some form. ISTA advocates that meaningful, across the board raises are necessary for all teachers, not just carve-outs for a select few. ISTA has been working closely with the bill’s author to remove this section.

Finally, two ISTA priority item bills, **HB 1145** 13th check for retirees and **SB 78** wireless device ban in schools, both passed out of committees this week and will move to the floor. Both bills have large bipartisan support.

We hope you can join us for our last [Day of Action](#) next week! This will be your final opportunity this legislative session to meet directly with your state legislators and advocate for policies that support our students, educators and public schools.

TAKE ACTION: PROTECT TEACHER CONTRACTS AND EMPLOYMENT PROTECTIONS

OVERVIEW

[HB 1004](#) is a large, nearly 200-page education deregulation bill that makes sweeping changes to Indiana law. While the bill contains many provisions, several sections raise serious concerns for educators and should be removed.

Why you should care

Among other concerning items, the bill would remove required work hours from teacher contracts and repeal long-standing legal protections for teachers in certain cooperatives and joint programs.

What you can do

Tell your legislators to remove concerning sections of the bill so existing laws and protections remain in place.

[TAKE ACTION](#)

TAKE ACTION: KEEP OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS SAFE PLACES SO KIDS CAN LEARN AND TEACHERS CAN TEACH

OVERVIEW

[SB 76](#) is an immigration bill that now clearly permits Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) forces unchecked access into public school corporations, sites that have traditionally served as safe havens for the most vulnerable and blameless—our children.

Why you should care

For years, administrations of both political parties have honored what is known as the “protected locations” policy—calling for immigration enforcement in schools, childcare centers, churches and hospitals only when an immediate danger to the public exists.

What you can do

Tell your legislators to support removing public schools from SB 76 and allow existing laws to govern.

[TAKE ACTION](#)

TAKE ACTION: DEFEND LOCAL CONTROL, FAIR FUNDING & INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE

OVERVIEW

[HB 1423](#) would make unprecedented changes to Indianapolis Public Schools. The bill bifurcates decision-making between a newly created, mayor-appointed, board, diminishing voter strength.

Why you should care

This bill will result in taxation without representation for voters in Indianapolis. Communities and educators deserve a fully elected school board with authority over academic programming of our schools.

What you can do

Tell your legislators to oppose HB 1423.

[TAKE ACTION](#)