



**OUR KIDS. OUR SCHOOLS. OUR FUTURE.**

To: All members

The Indiana General Assembly adjourned Friday Sine Die. Although this short session included the passage of numerous education bills, several key measures moved forward including ISTA legislative priorities and some harmful bills that ISTA strongly opposed. A full review and analysis of every bill worked on this session will be provided soon.

**HB 1004** passed on a concurrence vote of 66–29, meaning lawmakers in the House agreed with the changes the Senate made to this bill. HB 1004 was an omnibus deregulation bill that deleted hundreds of provisions from Indiana statute. ISTA worked diligently all session on the “hours” issue in the bill from its complete removal from the bill to amendments that would otherwise be acceptable. At its core, the bill removes from the regular teacher contract “the number of hours per day” that the teacher is expected to work. This applies to all teachers that teach under that contract. ISTA is fully aware that teachers already work well beyond the school day on numerous additional duties bought to them by their administrators and we continuously shared this reality with lawmakers. There is legal precedent favoring ISTA's position and ISTA will closely engage in implementation of this law going forward on multiple levels.

**HB 1423** passed the Senate also on a concurrence vote 67-30. ISTA opposed the bill 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 Indianapolis Mayor. The bill also shifts significant authority to this newly appointed board, including transportation, facilities and performance metrics. However, ISTA was able to successfully amend the bill in some positive ways, including an opt-out for both the 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, and implementation was delayed until 2028. The state accountability system must also be applied to IPS. Additionally, the bill establishes an appeals process for schools that are at risk of closing for chronic underperformance. Prior to closing a chronically underperforming school, the IPEC appointed board must consult with the Indiana Department of Education and hold a public hearing within the geographic boundaries of the district. If a charter authorizer or the board does not approve a school closure, the board may appeal to the Indiana State Board of Education. This provides another level of accountability before schools are closed.

**SB 76**, the omnibus immigration bill, passed the Senate on a concurrence vote of 37-11. The final version of the bill still includes language that includes K-12 schools as places through which immigration forces (ICE) can enter and enforce immigration laws. For decades (under what is referred to as the "safe space policy") K-12 schools have been included as safe spaces from these kinds of activities. Failure to comply results in a \$10,000 per violation fine. While the bill now does include the "gathering of information" in the list of things that local policies can not impede, there was also included the proviso that reads, "as long as the request for information does not conflict with applicable, federal or state law or policy." Further, the bill specifically includes university police along with hospital police and school resource officers as agents of immigration enforcement. Together with various coalition partners, ISTA worked to stop this bill and further information and resources will be provided in the coming weeks.

**SB 204** passed in conference committee by a vote of 66 - 28 in the House and 35 - 16 in the Senate. The bill contains several different provisions, but ISTA's primary concern was over language that makes further changes to differentiated pay guidelines through salary supplements, stipends and increments related to the factor called "academic needs". The implementation of this provision has been delayed until 2027 while the parties continue to work on improved language. The Indiana School Boards Association also sought changes to this SECTION.

Several ISTA priority issues made it through the final passage. **HB 1145** 13<sup>th</sup> check for retirees and **SB 78** wireless device ban in schools, both passed with large support.

Additionally, ISTA was able to significantly improve **SB 88** – a bill that started as an anti-DEI bill. ISTA worked with the author to remove language in the bill that would have discourage or even prohibited classroom instruction or discussion on the following topics:

- Racial identity or discrimination;
- Gender identity or discrimination;
- Victimization;
- Class struggle;
- A hierarchy of privileges; or
- Systemic exclusion.

Language requiring the display of the Ten Commandments in every classroom was also removed. The bill now focuses mostly on the Classical Learning Test as an alternative to the SAT and ACT for purposes of college admissions. The removal of the anti-DEI language is a huge victory for educators and students.

**SB 248** was a bill that would have dissolved the existing South Bend School Board by making it an advisory body only, and it would have replaced it with a fully appointed board by the Indiana Secretary of Education, thus removing public accountability to taxpaying voters and local representation. The bill died early in the first half of session.

Finally, language was inserted into the final version of **HB 1408** – mostly a workforce matters bill – to include strengthened social media protections for students, requiring parental consent and age verification and prohibiting the use of addictive algorithms for kids. ISTA supported this effort to reduce cyberbullying, negative content access, learning distractions and improving student overall safety and well-being.

ISTA thanks our members and partners in the advocacy efforts during this 2026 legislative session. Your voices were heard, and while some negative bills did pass, ISTA was able to significantly improve numerous bills, as well as stop some harmful legislation. Stay tuned as these bills are implemented and ISTA continues to work on these issues.