



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE, FEB. 14

As we enter week six of the 2025 legislative session, here's the latest on ISTA's advocacy and the bills we're tracking.

Before we get into the updates from this week, we want to say "thank you" to everyone who attended ISTA's Day of Action on Tuesday. So many of you were able to connect directly with or leave messages with your legislators at the Statehouse. Your voice makes a difference! The next Day of Action is on March 4 – [register today](#).

With next Thursday marking the deadline for bills to pass in the House or Senate, this week was a key milestone for legislation to stay alive and move into the second half of the session, when bills cross over to the opposite chamber. To advance, most bills needed to pass out of their respective committees this week and reach the floor for a vote. HB 1001, the state budget bill, will be heard in committee on Monday, where we expect to learn about changes proposed by House Republicans (see our call to action below). The Senate Education Committee held its final meeting for the first half of the session last week, while the House Education Committee met on Wednesday for what is expected to be its last meeting of the first half.

Updates on two bills mentioned in last week's newsletter, [HB 1285](#), Special Education (Rep. Cash, R – Zionsville) would require cameras in certain areas like special education classrooms where most of the

students have severe disabilities, seclusion areas, sensory rooms and time-out areas. The bill was heard in the House Education Committee on Wednesday, where the requirement for cameras was removed through an amendment. The requirement for cameras would have had a large fiscal impact on schools and the state. We will monitor whether this language comes back again.

Also, on Wednesday, the committee heard [HB 1500](#), Teacher Appreciation Grants (Rep. Behning, R – Indianapolis). While this bill was also amended, it would still completely overhaul the TAG program into an award chosen by administrators for high-needs teaching positions and other factors. Selected teachers would receive stipends of up to \$10,000 in three categories, with the stipend becoming a permanent part of their base salary—funded from the same pool used for all teacher salaries. The bill also removes all references to Indiana’s current teacher evaluation rating system of highly effective, effective and ineffective, and empowers school districts to create their own evaluation system. This change is mostly unrelated to TAG except that currently TAG recipients have to be rated effective or highly effective. The overhaul of the TAG program is still being developed, and ISTA is working with lawmakers to address some concerns. Regardless, the TAG program will look dramatically different next year.

Lastly, other high-profile bills moving this week were [SB 287](#) and [HB 1230](#). While different in approach, these bills seek to make school boards a partisan office. SB 287 would require school board candidates to affiliate with a political party and be elected in the primary. HB 1230 would require school board candidates to list their political party next to their name on the ballot. ISTA opposes introducing partisanship into school board elections. School board candidates should be elected based on their qualifications, experience, and platform—not their political party.

For details on other bills that moved in the House and Senate this week, check [ISTA’s feed on X](#). We’ll soon be transitioning to Bluesky—be sure to [follow us](#) and invite your family and friends to join!

Join the Day of Action: March 4 | [Register](#)

Virtual Legislative Briefing: Feb. 17 | [Register](#)



HB 1001 (Rep. Jeff Thompson – Lizton)

STATE BUDGET

Overview

Indiana’s public schools, where 90% of students attend, are facing teacher shortages, rising student mental health needs, and limited resources. These schools are the heart of our communities, and investing in them is essential to ensuring every child has access to a high-quality education.

Why you should care

Strong public schools support students’ success and the vitality of our neighborhoods. Competitive teacher pay helps attract and retain educators, while investments in mental health services ensure students can thrive both academically and personally. Supporting the public schools in your district means supporting the future of your community.

What you can do

Send an email to your state senator and representative and urge them to prioritize public education.

TAKE ACTION

Read the ISTA [blog](#) and follow us on social media for more legislative updates and ways you can take action.

