

ISBA Legislative Resolutions

The Indiana School Boards Association is dedicated to maintaining and improving the quality of public education in the State of Indiana. The ISBA believes that the Indiana General Assembly should continue to take the necessary action to ensure that funding levels allow local schools to continue to improve public education.

This Association supports local control by individual boards of education. The ISBA believes that the governance and management of local schools should be a responsibility of the chosen representatives of the local citizens in each school community and sufficient authority should be given to effectively carry out that important responsibility. The ISBA supports educational programs that do not foster racial, social, or economic segregation or segregation of special needs children.

With this preamble, ISBA also believes that the following education-related concepts reflect ongoing resolutions of the Association that should be considered whenever legislation is enacted on behalf of Indiana public schools.

STANDING RESOLUTIONS

- A. **Funding State Mandates**
State-mandated education programs must be fully funded by the state.
- B. **Elected/Appointed Boards and School Board Election**
The General Assembly should not mandate whether the local school board is to be elected or appointed and whether the local school board is elected in the primary or general election.
- C. **Equivalent Instruction**
Indiana should develop a definition of and establish regulations for "equivalent instruction" for non-accredited schools including home school instruction.
- D. **Instructional Time/CLASS SIZE**
Instructional time and class size are directly related to student achievement. ISBA, therefore, supports guaranteeing sufficient instructional time for k-12 programs and maintaining lower class sizes in grades k-3 with full state funding.
- E. **Teacher Collective Bargaining**
The Indiana General Assembly should not consider revisions to the teacher bargaining law, P.L. 217, Acts of 1973, unless a revision expands the authority of school board governance.
- F. **Property Taxes and Other Revenue Sources**
The Indiana School Boards Association strongly supports that all public school corporations receive adequate and responsible funding. To ensure stable funding, there is a need to utilize property taxes as a revenue source. However, if there is a fundamental shift from property taxes to other revenue sources, the state must guarantee that education funding is

protected, that revenue growth is continued, and that controlling restrictions are reduced. Additionally, the Association supports the creation of a comprehensive legislative study and final plan as to how local school corporations will deal with potential and actual loss of revenues due to refunds from taxpayers' appeals.

G. School Governance Role/Powers

The Indiana School Boards Association supports legislation that upholds and does not erode the authority of the local school board to govern the public schools.

H. Staff Development Programs

The Indiana School Boards Association supports fully state funded professional staff development and in-service programs that are beyond the 180-day school year.

I. Student Testing

The Indiana School Boards Association believes that reasonable and responsible standardized measurement of student achievement and progress is important to guarantee accountability for public education. The ISBA encourages an efficient testing schedule and timely reporting of results, a short time frame or permission for local school corporations to score the test and report the results, the determination of reasonable standards, a streamlining of the testing process to reduce or eliminate loss of class instructional time, and a statewide change from a fall to a spring testing schedule. The Association supports the creation of a waiver procedure as an alternative to state selected tests. There should be an alternative testing option that meets or exceeds state standards.

J. Charter Schools

The Indiana School Boards Association believes that Charter Schools should be established solely under the control of the local school board. The Association will support such Charter Schools that protect against discrimination in any form, exclude voucher plans, establish a separate funding mechanism, permit waivers of state statutes and rules, and require minimum state academic standards.

K. TIF Districts/Tax Abatements

The Indiana School Boards Association believes that any system of tax abatement and tax incremental financing (TIF) must provide a mechanism for replacing revenue lost to the public schools.

L. Classified Personnel Bargaining

The Indiana School Boards Association opposes any legislation to impose mandatory collective bargaining with classified personnel in local public schools. Local school communities should maintain the right to determine whether collective bargaining with classified personnel is in the best interest of their school corporation.

PRESENT RESOLUTIONS

A. Finance:

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1. Funding
 - a. School Distribution Formula
 - b. Special Education/High Ability Students
 - c. Special Needs Factor
 - d. Summer School
 - e. Textbooks and Instructional Materials
 - f. Transportation
 - g. Vocational Education
 - h. Year-Round School
 - i. Capital Projects Fund—
Maintenance (Skilled) Personnel
 - j. Lease Rental Payments from Debt Service Fund
2. Petition/Remonstrance

B. Programs:

1. Alternative Schools
2. Kindergarten
3. School Choice
4. Voucher Plan

C. School Governance:

School Corporation Consolidation

A. **FINANCE**

6-A-1

Funding

The Indiana School Boards Association supports the timely and adequate funding of Indiana's public schools to allow local boards of education to improve the quality of public education. Specifically, the Association supports the following:

a. **School Distribution Formula**

1. The ISBA strongly supports equalization of educational opportunities for all children.
2. The ISBA supports the addition of the following provisions into the school distribution formula for all qualifying school corporations:
 - (a) A weighted cost factor for high ability student programs.
 - (b) A weighted cost factor for school corporations employing teachers with additional experience and training.
 - (c) A weighted cost factor for students with limited English proficiency.
 - (d) Full funding for school corporations that have or will initiate all-day kindergarten programs.
 - (e) Full funding of the employer portion of social security.
 - (f) Full funding of the employer portion of teacher retirement.
 - (g) At-risk funding for all school corporations.
 - (h) A weighted cost factor for growing school corporations.
 - (i) A weighted cost factor for staff development.
 - (j) Minimum-guarantee funding for school corporations within the school funding formula.
 - (k) A guarantee of no loss in state funding based on student achievement scores with the implementation of PL 221 and PL 146.
 - (l) Full funding of remediation programs.

b. **Special Education/High Ability Students**

1. The ISBA supports adequate and stable funding for special education and high ability student programs.
2. The ISBA believes that all excess costs for special education services in out-of-state institutions should be funded by the State.
3. The ISBA supports adequate and stable funding for the preschool special education program.
4. The ISBA supports financial incentives for local school corporations to create programs for the education of special education students in the local school community.

- c. **Special Needs Factor**
School corporations have unique needs that are presently not addressed in the school funding formula. The ISBA believes that a factor should be developed to meet these special needs, such as security, substance abuse prevention and truancy.
- d. **Summer School**
The ISBA supports adequate and stable state funding for summer school remediation and academic enrichment programs including bus transportation.
- e. **Textbooks and Instructional Materials**
 - 1. The ISBA supports adequate and stable state funding of textbooks, workbooks, associated instructional materials and computer software for classroom instruction for all pupils in the public schools.
 - 2. The ISBA supports local control and selection of textbooks, workbooks, associated instructional materials and computer software for classroom instruction.
- f. **Transportation**
 - 1. The ISBA supports adequate and stable state funding for regular transportation services.
 - 2. The ISBA supports adequate and stable state funding for special/ vocational transportation services.
- g. **Vocational Education**
 - 1. The ISBA supports adequate and stable state funding for vocational education.
 - 2. The ISBA believes that control and selection of educational choices for vocational classes should be a local control issue.
- h. **Year-Round School**
The ISBA supports adequate and stable state funding for the inter-session costs of year-round school programs and bus transportation.
- i. **Capital Projects Fund—Maintenance (Skilled) Personnel**
The ISBA supports the payment of maintenance (skilled) personnel salaries and fringe benefits from the Capital Projects Fund without limitation for all school corporations.
- j. **Lease Rental Payment from Debt Service Fund**
The ISBA supports that school corporations have the option to make lease rental payments from the Debt Service Fund.

Rationale

The Indiana School Boards Association believes that the school distribution formula must provide equalization of educational opportunities for all school corporations. School funding is a complex area that demands constant review to assure adequate funding levels for all school corporations.

6-A-2

Petition/Remonstrance

The Indiana School Boards Association charges the Indiana General Assembly to maintain and improve equitable statewide standards and procedures for the petition/remonstrance process.

Rationale

The petition/remonstrance process for school construction projects has had problems with the consistency of the certification of taxpayer signatures. A uniform system should be established to assure that inequities do not occur. The process needs a thorough review to determine how the divisiveness in a community can be minimized when the petition/remonstrance process is utilized.

B. PROGRAMS

6-B-1

Alternative Schools

The Indiana School Boards Association believes that an alternative school program is a local control issue, which should be supported by a weighted cost factor in the school funding formula.

Rationale

Components of alternative school programs:

1. The local school board should have total control and authority over the alternative school program;
2. Alternative schools should be fully state funded;
3. Waivers should be allowed for specific statutes, rules, etc., if the local school board determines such waivers will appropriately enhance specific student learning outcomes;
4. Alternative school plans should focus on the needs of students;
5. The pooling of resources with other public school corporations should be permitted;
6. The local school board should be granted the authority and flexibility to contract with not-for-profit or for-profit corporations to provide alternative education; and,
7. The local school board should be allowed to terminate the alternative school program at any time.

6-B-2

Kindergarten

The Indiana School Boards Association will support mandated full-day kindergarten, provided there is adequate and stable state funding to implement and maintain the program.

Rationale

Because of the importance of early learning and school readiness, Indiana must appropriate the financial resources to expand from voluntary kindergarten to mandated full-day kindergarten (5 year old school entry age) and eventually preschool programs. The need for financial resources for early learning initiatives is significant because the economic well being of the state is dependent upon public school students achieving the highest possible academic standards. Kindergarten and preschool programs will prepare all students to perform better academically as they advance through the grades and thus achieving the primary purpose of early intervention in the learning process.

6-B-3

School Choice

The Indiana School Boards Association believes that school choice is a local control issue.

Rationale

The local school board should be allowed to exercise the following without a state mandate:

1. A plan that gives parents the right to choose schools within a school corporation;
2. A plan that is not part of a mandated federal or state voucher program to finance non-public schools;
3. A plan that addresses financial and management issues such as busing, class size, collective bargaining, etc.; and,
4. A plan that may require annual commitment or longer once the student is placed in a given school program.

The organization of the public school programs is both a national and state issue. But, the delegation of the power to organize has been traditionally a local control determination. With this understanding, the Indiana School Boards Association wishes to ensure continued local control of student placement, school facility utilization, staff procurement, and all other general operations. This is best served if school choice is a local school board's determination, which protects certain school operations from outside intrusion.

6-B-4

Voucher Plan

The Indiana School Boards Association opposes any voucher plan that permits the expenditure of public tax dollars for private school education, such as parochial schools, accredited/nonaccredited private schools, religious institutes and so forth.

Rationale

Public school tax dollars must be fully committed to the mission of public schools. A voucher plan that allows public financing of non-public schools redirects limited financial resources from the public schools and is not supported by the ISBA. Voucher plans are unacceptable because:

1. Public schools need all the resources available to meet the expanding needs of students and the increasing standards of public education;
2. Voucher plans encourage student withdrawal from the public schools rather than the resolution of educational problems; and
3. Vouchers are a debatable constitutional issue, Indiana Constitution: Article 1 Section 6.

C. **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE**

School Corporation Consolidation

The Indiana School Boards Association supports a study of school corporation consolidation. However, the study must include the following tenets: limit the number of changes with current statute, respect for local control, decision made by the school boards/ citizens of the affected school corporations and primary emphasis on quality student achievement, not budget.

Rationale

There have been continual state level suggestions that school corporation consolidations should be considered, primarily for greater efficiency of operation. ISBA does not oppose more budgetary efficiency but advocates that school corporation consolidations should be for the primary purpose of attaining quality student achievement.