

ICPE Legislative Review April 2025

Budget

HEA 1001 - This bill created the budget for the state, including the tuition support budget for the 2026 and 2027 school years. Funding for traditional public schools didn't make it to the rate of inflation which, based on a new Core CPI forecast in April, predicts inflation at 4% and 2.9% for 2026 & 2027—worse than expected. The new budget was increased by 3.3% in 2026 and only 1.6% in 2027. The tuition support budget now includes textbook reimbursement so that detracts from the increase because it was a separate line item before this.

WINNERS: Millionaires and billionaires. Indiana just made vouchers universal starting the second year of the biennium when the income caps are lifted on who gets a voucher. \$178 million more, across 2026 and 2027, is earmarked for vouchers. Most of the money will go to the highest income earners in Indiana in the second year of the biennium. Many of these students likely never intend to go to public schools in the first place, and parents are already paying for their private tuition. Welfare for the uber wealthy was prioritized.

LOSERS: Children with special needs and children who are English language learners. Grants for these students were cut across the board, along with the career and technical training grants.

Tax Cuts

SEA 1 - Massive property tax cuts. This bill was Braun's plan, his campaign pledge. In years 2026 and 2027, traditional public schools get an increase of \$401.5 million in the budget (per HB 1001 - tuition support run), but are then, as a whole, slated to lose \$408 million in property taxes due to property tax cuts in those same years (per most recent fiscal note on SB 1). It will vary from district to district how badly schools will fare.

WINNERS: Charter school lobby and charter school families. Rolled into this bill (SEA1) was the language from SB518. This requires that, beginning in 2028, property tax dollars earmarked for your local school district's operations fund be split with charter schools (if the charter schools in your district receive over 100 students from within that public school district). This includes referendum funds.

LOSERS: Taxpayers who support their public schools. The loss of funding, including referenda, to charter schools where taxpayers have no say through elected schools boards, is tantamount to taxation without representation. Additionally, the loss of property tax revenue will likely force local municipalities to raise taxes on themselves to make up for the fact that the state is no longer paying charter school grants.

Weakening the Value of Public Education and Public Schools

HEA 1348- Weakening of the value of public schools. A homeschool diploma will now carry the same weight as a high school diploma, regardless of what goes into the attainment of that piece of paper.

HEA 1002 / SEA 366- Weakening the value of public education. The requirements of secretary of education and superintendents have been watered down. The secretary of education no longer needs to have an education background, college degree, or be from Indiana; and superintendents no longer need a master's degree. Deprofessionalizing education continues.

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to action and follow them!**

Democracy, Separation of Church and State, and Loss of Local Control

SEA 287 - More partisan politics and less democracy. School board candidates can now declare a party when running for election. Due to this, federal workers cannot run for school board due to the federal HATCH Act (SEA 287) The focus on kids will diminish as the focus on party platforms intensifies.

HB 1001- Eliminating a school district with the stroke of a pen. With no process, no criteria, no public input or debate, the general assembly dissolved the Union School Corporation with language stuck into the budget.

SEA 1- Originally in SB8, SEA1 includes language on referendum control. Referendums for funding must occur in general election years. Local communities will not get to decide what is the best timing.

SEA 255 - There is an increase in minutes for release-time for high schoolers to attend off-campus religious education, but there are more accountability measures in place for third-parties that offer these electives.

HEA 1515- Creating separate agencies to manage school facilities and transportation, away from elected school board control. It is now a requirement for IPS via the "Indianapolis Local Education Alliance"—and an option for agencies in 3 other areas via the Centralized School Facilities Pilot Program and Local Boards. The majority of board members on the ILEA are representing charter schools. These are not elected members. Again, taxation without representation. HOWEVER, final version of the ILEA language puts a temporary 6 month moratorium on any charter authorizer, other than the Indianapolis Mayor, approving new charters to open within IPS boundaries, and removes the language allowing governor appointees to ILEA.

HEA 1002- A school district can now legally be turned into an all-charter district and charter authorizers are no longer legally responsible to ensure that a charter school is in compliance with applicable legal standards as determined by the SBOE. (HEA 1002)

***WINNERS:** Charter school lobby and culture war proponents.*

***LOSERS:** Our communities. Also, the kids.*

Anti-DEI and Anti-SEL: Making Schools, and Teaching, Less Inclusive

HEA 1002/SEA 289– Anti DEI push. Removes a mandate to provide a racial or ethnic studies course in high school. Removes any requirement of DEI training for licensing or employment and forbids the implementation of such training on students. Enables white supremacy to perpetuate.

HEA 1002– Weakening of culturally responsive teaching methods. The required teacher prep training methods for restorative justice and social & emotional training are no longer required by teacher training programs.

***WINNERS:** Bigots and history whitewashers. Puts a chill on the teaching of anti-racism, anti-bigotry. If we can't name it, we can't address it.*

***LOSERS:** Our kids and a multiracial democracy. Kids learn better when they see themselves in history, feel understood and respected in the classroom. Learning doesn't happen in a vacuum. They need the skills to self-regulate and control their feelings. DEI and SEL help children learn academically and for our society.*

ANTI-PRIVATIZATION WINS

- Guardrails were created for the ESA and CSA voucher programs. Both programs were moved to the control of the Indiana Dept of Ed instead of the Treasurer (HEA 1001). AND a parent can't pay themselves for teaching their child. (SEA 358)
- A \$50 million charter school building grant was removed from the budget. (HEA 1001)
- No universal SGOs pre-tax vouchers (that bill failed).
- No chaplains allowed in schools as counselors (that bill failed).
- ESA and CSA (voucher programs not expanded).
- Crackdown on virtual schools. Legislators requested that the IDOE provide a report on the academic readiness of students in virtual schools. (HEA 1515) Per pupil funding did not increase.