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The vision of the non-partisan Indiana Coalition for Public Education is to advocate for high quality, equitable, well-funded public schools for all children that are subject to democratic oversight by their communities.

Post-Session Legislative Review March 2026

Democracy and loss of local control

HEA 1423 - The blueprint for loss of local voice on public schools. This bill follows recommendations from [ILEA](#), a task force created through state legislation last year. HEA 1423 forms a new mayor-appointed body to oversee transportation, facilities, and certain financial functions for all public schools within the Indianapolis Public Schools boundary, including charters, stripping significant authority away from the elected IPS school board. It aims to unify systems across district and charter schools.

Winners. Charter expansion advocates and the organizations driving privatization in Indianapolis, the Indianapolis mayor's office (through significantly expanded appointment power), and the broader network of political and charter advocacy groups that have pushed for years for the weakening local democratic control of IPS in order to expand charter influence and reshape the district — often framing the tradeoff as “unified transportation and accountability.”

Losers. Indianapolis voters, taxpayers, and families who lose meaningful control over their public schools. This bill sets in motion a massive restructuring of schools with unprecedented power and funding in the hands of privately-run charter schools.. The mayor, elected by people who live within eleven school districts in Indianapolis, will now have major control over only one of those districts, IPS. For now, the plan relies on mere promises in the wake of 2025's SEA 1, a law that is already causing financial freefall and massive instability for many school districts.

The language that will allow what has happened in IPS to happen elsewhere:

HEA 1266 - Requires the Secretary of Education to create a report with recommendations on strategies to support academically and fiscally underperforming schools, including interventions where necessary. The bill includes language that establishes state intervention measures and adjusts language to allow the transfer of control over school buildings and transportation from elected school boards to appointed centralized boards (a la HEA 1423).

SEA 239 - Makes it easier to convert public schools into charter schools and expands innovation network schools without voter approval. It also prevents school boards from both authorizing and partnering with innovation charter schools, forcing those schools away from local oversight and further separating them from the public education system. There is a risk for

a school corporation to join this kind of centralized board endeavor. It duplicates a lot of costs and work. It could lead to co-location of schools within one building and/or conversion of a public school into a charter school. Laws differ for these two types of schools. The fear of not getting a referendum passed and the desperation for more funding may lead to districts entering into these partnerships. This would strip away local voice and local accountability of public schools, instead placing control in the hands of appointed members. This is taxation without representation. Public schools have laws of transparency and accountability that are essential to what makes them public. The people's voice, as the public, must be central to governing.

Winners. Charter expansion advocates and the organizations driving privatization.

Losers. Communities, taxpayers, and local democratic accountability and control.

Undermining the foundation of schools being a safe space

SEA 76 - ICE in public schools. School should be a safe and welcoming place where children can focus on learning without fear. SEA 76 undermines that foundation. By requiring local governments — including school districts — to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement, the bill risks turning schools into places of uncertainty and anxiety for students and families instead of spaces of safety and support.

Winners. Federal immigration enforcement (ICE), the Indiana attorney general, and supporters of stricter immigration enforcement.

Losers. Students, immigrant families, and school communities. By tying schools to immigration enforcement—particularly U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement—SEA 76 risks turning schools from places of safety and learning into places of fear and uncertainty, discouraging families from fully engaging with their children's education and often keeping children from attending school at all.

Voucher expansion

SEA 1266 - Now we also have federal vouchers. Governor Braun opted Indiana into the Federal scholarship granting organization (SGO) voucher program on 1/22/26. A section of 1266, a bill that became a dumping ground for language from dead bills, embeds the participation of Indiana in the federal tax credit scholarship program for elementary and secondary education under Section 25F of the Internal Revenue Code (Commonly known as the One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025). This federal tax credit has not been fully finalized yet, but there are national SGO programs already setting up shop.

Winners. Unknown. As of yet, the federal tax credit has not been fully finalized yet.

Losers. Tax-funded services and institutions.

Positives

School safety

SEA 78 – Bell-to-bell ban on cellphone devices. This is a bill that many support because it actually makes the previous cellphone ban law less vague. SEA 78 bans cellphones, personal laptops, smartwatches, and other devices from schools for the full school day and specifies that any learning on devices must be done on school-issued devices. There are some exceptions.

HEA 1098 - More guardrails protecting students. This bill provides legal clarity for work-based learning programs (such as apprenticeship programs needed for graduation with some diploma seals) by requiring intermediaries and employers to enter into written agreements detailing their respective duties and responsibilities when a student participates in such a program. It also ensures that, under certain conditions, students in these programs are entitled to workers' compensation and occupational disease benefits.

Other wins

- In-state SGO caps continue to remain the same. They were not eliminated.
- The South Bend school board was not taken over by the state.
- No display of ten commandments on classroom walls will be mandated by law.
- Language was inserted into HEA 1266 to ensure that elected school board members are included in the centralized boards.
- “Charter schools” were added to the HEA 1242 report of school efficiency. While that is positive, we would have preferred that private schools also be included in this report, as a significant amount of public money goes to private schools with no transparency or accountability.
- A controversial gender bill died. Public schools must be welcoming spaces for all. This bill would have affected that belief by restricting transgender students' access to bathrooms and locker rooms in K-12 schools and public colleges, requiring them to use facilities that match their sex assigned at birth.

What Do We Do Next? Be an Informed Voter.

- [Primary day is May 5, 2026.](#)
- School board candidate filing dates have changed! The filing period begins May 19, 2026 and ends June 18, 2026 at noon.
- [Join us!](#)
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- Attend our grassroots meetings – [sign up here](#)