LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2027

The Indiana Coalition for Public Education (ICPE) is a nonpartisan nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving and strengthening Indiana's public schools. We advocate for high-quality, equitable, well-funded public education for all Hoosier children, with democratic oversight by the communities they serve.

Summary

1. **Public schools must be the first priority in state education funding.** Indiana must increase investment in its traditional public schools to keep pace with inflation and many other rising costs. ICPE supports legislative measures to mitigate the loss of property tax revenue resulting from SEA1 (2025) or measures which will help increase funding to public schools.

2. **Public funds belong in public schools**. Hoosier taxpayers cannot afford the continued expansion of voucher and other "school choice" programs at the expense of our public education system.

3. **All public tax dollars allocated to preK–12 education must be subject to transparent accounting and oversight by elected officials to ensure fiscal accountability**. ICPE believes in local control and that publicly elected school board members play an essential role in ensuring accountability to the communities they serve. All schools that take public funds should accept and be willing to educate all children—no exceptions.

4. **Public school buildings and facilities are funded by the public and must remain under public ownership and control, subject to transparent, democratic local decision-making and governance.**

5. **All children– from preK to their senior year– deserve fully resourced, inclusive public schools** led by educated and experienced teachers who have a voice at the table in educational decision making. They should teach historically and scientifically accurate curricula, in order to prepare students for careers and for being good citizens in our democracy.

ICPE Indiana Coalition *for* Public Education

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2027

Expanded Explanation

1. **Public schools must be the first priority in state education funding. Indiana must increase investment in its traditional public schools to keep pace with inflation and the many other rising costs.**

    a. ICPE supports legislative measures to mitigate the loss of property tax revenue resulting from SEA1 (2025) or measures which will help increase funding to public schools.

    b. We are against unfunded and underfunded state mandates on public schools.

    c. Special education is severely underfunded and must be fixed.

2. **Public funds belong in public schools. Hoosier taxpayers cannot afford the continued expansion of voucher and other "school choice" programs at the expense of our public education system.**

    a. ICPE calls for an immediate halt to the diversion of public funds and resources from public schools to private institutions—including private schools and charter schools—that operate without transparency or accountability. We strongly oppose the continued expansion of "school choice" programs, including Education Scholarship Accounts (ESAs), vouchers (Choice Scholarships), microschools, virtual schools, and charter schools, that lack elected oversight of taxpayer spending.

    b. The continued expansion of these programs creates duplicative systems and administrative costs, adding inefficiencies to an already underfunded public education system, while traditional public schools, which accept all students, struggle to provide the resources and educational programs their students deserve.

3. **All public tax dollars allocated to preK–12 education must be subject to transparent accounting and oversight by elected officials to ensure fiscal accountability. ICPE believes in local control and that publicly elected school board members play an essential role in ensuring accountability to the communities they serve.**

a. All schools (and other private or nonprofit education providers) that accept public tax dollars should be audited by the State Board of Accounts and be as transparent by law as traditional public schools– including the disclosure of funds supplanted by public tax dollars.

b. All assets belonging to the public, paid for with the tax dollars of community members, must remain in democratic public control.

c. All schools that take public funds should accept and be willing to educate all children—no exceptions.

d. All schools (and other private or nonprofit education providers) that accept public tax dollars should be subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for access to their buildings and facilities.

e. All schools (and other private or nonprofit education providers) that accept public tax dollars should be subject to the same background check requirements as employees of traditional public schools to ensure the safety of all Hoosier students, regardless of what kind of school they attend.

f. There must be strong oversight of charter school authorizers. Remove authorizers that fail to abide by the state statutes of charter authorization or renewal, including requirements for public hearings and notices to the public and local school districts.

g. ICPE supports transparency in curriculum. All laws and regulations related to public access and review of curriculum should be equally applied to all K-12 education entities that accept state funding, including charter and voucher schools.

h. ICPE supports legislation that would give public school foundations access to the same tax credit limits that state-based scholarship granting organizations (SGOs) receive.

i. ICPE supports the right of local communities—including families—to choose who governs their local public schools. Elected school boards provide families and community members with a direct voice in the governance of their public schools..

j. ICPE supports the dissolution of the all-appointed IPEC and the restoration of the duties and responsibilities to the elected school board of Indianapolis Public Schools. ICPE supports legislation that also restores local control to Gary and

Muncie by reinstating the election and responsibilities of school board members, granting these communities the autonomy to manage resources in the best interests of their students and residents. All communities deserve democracy.

4. **Public school buildings and facilities are funded by the public and must remain under public ownership and control, subject to transparent, democratic local decision-making and governance.**

    a. We oppose the location or co-location of charter schools within public school buildings, whether through the $1 dollar law, IPEC or other means. Charter schools are publicly funded and privately run.

    b. We oppose the use of consolidation as a money-saving tool unless that decision is made by and with support for local public school districts. It must not be forced on communities without a clear framework and without careful consideration of the research showing the harms and lack of cost savings from consolidation.

    c. Charter schools must also have rigorous standards for efficiency. Each charter is considered a school corporation by law. Expansion of charter and voucher schools without the same rules for transparency and accountability is a misuse of taxpayer dollars.

    d. ICPE opposes any expansion of the Indianapolis Public Education Corporation legislation that would further reduce or remove the roles and responsibilities of elected school board members. Public assets and facilities belong in public hands in fairness to the community who pays for them. Public schools belong to our communities.

    e. Public dollars should strengthen neighborhood public schools — not subsidize state-imposed takeovers by private charter operators. Charter school location or co-location strips away local control, diverts public dollars and destabilizes neighborhood public schools.

5. **All children– from preK to their senior year– deserve fully resourced, inclusive public schools led by educated and experienced teachers who have a voice at the table in educational decision making. They should teach historically and scientifically accurate curricula, open to the public, in order to prepare students for careers and to be good citizens in our democracy.**

a. We support educating the whole child through the work of social-emotional learning and removing barriers to learning through diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

b. ICPE supports funding for the education and licensing (certification) of teachers through accredited post-secondary institutions of higher education. We oppose lowering the standards for the teaching profession. Teachers who are not fully qualified or are working under an emergency license should be required to pursue proper licensure, with financial support to help them achieve this goal.

c. We support historically and scientifically accurate and inclusive curricula as well as local control over educational materials.

d. ICPE supports the repeal of mandatory retention of third graders using IREAD-3 or any other high-stakes testing. We propose providing supports and interventions for students and professional development for teachers. We support conducting holistic and accurate assessments of students and expanding options for learning (all of which necessitate additional funding for adequate support).

e. ICPE supports legislation that prepares all children for a bright future through pre-K, general education and special education. Children learn best in a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment.

f. ICPE supports the work and professional expertise of all who help our children: nurses, psychologists, counselors and social workers, and we recognize the need for funding in these areas to bring student to professional ratios in line with best practices.