



The Indianapolis Local Education Alliance met on December 17th, 2025, in the Public Assembly Room of the Indianapolis City County Building at 6:00 PM.

After additional public comment the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance voted on the attached recommendations. The vote was as follows:

Voting for: Barato Britt, Indianapolis Mayor Joe Hogsett, Indianapolis Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Aleesia Johnson, Indianapolis City/County Councilor Maggie Lewis, Toby McClamroch, Andrew Neal, Bart Peterson, Angela Smith-Jones.

Voting Against: Tina Ahlgren

The Indianapolis Local Education Alliance conducted their work over ten different public meetings from June 2025 through December 2025, taking over 14 hours of public comment from hundreds of citizens over that time period and these recommendations are based on both the charge given to the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance by the Indiana General Assembly in H.E.A. 1515 and the input from those hours of public comment.

The Indianapolis Local Education Alliance appreciates the opportunity the Indiana General Assembly has provided to give recommendations on this important work.

Final Recommendations of the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance

- I. **Indianapolis Public Education Corporation.** Create an independent agency known as the Indianapolis Public Education Corporation (the Corporation). The functions and responsibility of the Corporation will be as follows:
1. Control the management and operations of buildings serving as public schools within the boundaries of the Indianapolis Public Schools District.¹
 2. Lead and oversee the provision of transportation of students to and from public schools within the IPS District boundaries.
 3. Levy property taxes within the IPS District Boundaries. The collection and distribution of property taxes in Indiana is extremely complex and requires consultation with fiscal experts at the Indiana General Assembly. The Indianapolis Local Education Alliance wants to assure that a fair, equitable and efficient system is appropriately funded.
 4. Enforce accountability standards that are applicable to all public charter schools and traditional public schools within the IPS District boundaries. Create an Advisory Board to promote collaboration between authorizers, IPS, and the Corporation in the development and implementation of the unified performance accountability standards.
 5. Manage a unified enrollment system applicable to all public-school students within the jurisdiction of the Corporation.²

II. **Governance.** The Indianapolis Public Education Corporation will be led by a Board of Directors.

1. There will be nine members of the Board. All nine members will be appointed by the Mayor of Indianapolis. Three members must be current public charter school leaders. Three members must be currently serving members of the Indianapolis Board of School Commissioners. The final three members should have expertise in areas such as facilities, management, capital planning, and transportation and logistics; or experience working with vulnerable student populations and communities. The mayor will designate the chair of the board. All members must reside in the IPS District. ³
2. The terms of the members of the Board will be staggered with each member serving fixed terms. ⁴

III. **Accountability:** Indianapolis Local Education Alliance recommends a single school performance framework across all public schools in the IPS District.

1. The framework should set clear expectations for school performance, be based on multiple measures (including state assessment outcomes, student discipline practices, and other key measures that are relevant to student success), and guide decisions for replication of instructional models that are achieving the best results for students – especially those who have been historically underserved throughout the system.
2. Implementation of the single school performance framework should focus on:
 - a. Developing measures based on both the Mayor’s Office of Education Innovation performance framework and the State’s final A-F accountability rules.

- b. A commitment across all sectors to use data from the performance framework to make decisions around closing chronically low-performing schools (after a transparent public process with adequate time provided for struggling schools to make improvements.)
- c. Developing metrics for the opening and closing of school facilities (i.e. physical condition of facility, number of enrolled students, deferred maintenance, regional and community analysis of need).

IV. Unified System

- 1. All public schools within the IPS District will be required to provide transportation to students within the IPS District attending their schools at a level established by the Corporation.
- 2. For purposes of public-school building reuse, the Corporation will ensure that facilities will be provided to all public charter schools, innovation network charter schools and IPS schools on an equitable basis.

V. Schools as Local Education Agencies (LEAs): IPS will continue to exist as an LEA as will all public charter schools. With the exception of the responsibilities assumed by the Corporation for facilities, transportation, and uniform accountability standards, the Board of School Commissioners for Indianapolis Public Schools will continue to provide direction for the operation of all district-run schools, as is currently the case, and the not-for-profit boards of all public charter schools will also remain in place with the same authority as is currently the case. The IPS Board of School Commissioners will continue in its current form with the current model of election of Board members.

VI. Additional Key Recommendations

1. Exempt the Indianapolis Public Schools District and all Public Charter Schools contained within from the Indiana Dollar Law. (Indiana Code 20-26-7.1-4).⁵
2. The only authorizers of new charter schools to be located inside the IPS District boundaries will be the Mayor of Indianapolis through OEI and the Indiana State Charter School Board. Existing charter agreements authorized through other entities may operate until the end of the current contract terms. The IPS Board of School Commissioners may also choose to authorize schools through application to the Indiana State Board of Education.⁶
3. The Indianapolis Local Education Alliance asks the Indiana General Assembly for full funding of Special Education within the IPS district boundaries and suggests the need for additional work to determine the best model for equitable access and service for the Special Education needs across all public-school types within the district boundaries. IPS currently provides full special education funding at a \$24 million annual deficit.
4. A document will be attached to our final recommendations that details the multiple legal issues that will need consideration and review at the Indiana General Assembly.

¹ See legal memo attachment

² Currently performed by Enroll Indy.

³ All elements of the new board structure to be defined in statute.

⁴ All elements of the new board timing to be defined in statute.

⁵ Requires action by the Indiana General Assembly to create this exemption

⁶ The Indianapolis Public Schools Board of Commissioners has indicated they will pursue charter authorizing authority from the State of Indiana



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Legal Considerations/Limitations to the Models by the Indianapolis Local Education Alliance¹

I. Transportation Services

a. Change in Transportation Services

Indiana Code chapter 20-27-13 applies to all school corporations and expressly states what transportation must be provided and the process that schools generally must use when there are certain changes to transportation.

b. Ownership of Busses

Many school busses are leased by school corporations (and perhaps charter schools) instead of purchased. A due diligence piece in executing any plan is to evaluate whether buses are owned or leased and whether title or the lease can be transferred or assigned.

c. Existing Contracts with Transportation Providers

Should charter schools or Indianapolis Public Schools ("IPS") utilize contracts with independent transportation providers, then these should be examined as they may be a hinderance to any transition plan or require costly termination payments.

d. Operations Fund Monies

In 2017 and 2018 through legislation, the General Assembly merged property-tax based levies into one—the newly-created Operations Fund—effective January 1, 2019. Three of those prior property-tax levies now merged into the Operations Fund are the (i) capital project fund, (ii) transportation fund, and (iii) bus replacement fund. *See* Public Law 244-2017 (H.E.A. 1009 (2017)); Public Law 140-2018 (H.E.A. 1167 (2018)). Indiana Code limits uses of operations fund monies to capital project plan expenditures, transportation costs, bus replacement, overhead and

¹ The information provided is offered for general informal purposes only. It is not, and should not be construed as, legal advice. The reader is encouraged to seek and obtain legal advice on these issues.

operational expenditures, historical societies or art associations, and for playgrounds expenditures. IND. CODE § 20-40-18-5.

e. Transfer of Staff

Transferring staff from IPS to another entity may require approval or input from any exclusive representative of established bargaining units of classified (or non-certificated) employees. Similarly, transfer of employees and any State retirement plan benefits may require statutory amendment to avoid adversely impacting retirement benefits of the transferred employees.

II. Facilities

a. Overview

The Indiana Constitution limits the ability of political subdivisions (including school corporations) to issue debt. Many school corporations utilize the process under Indiana Code article 20-47 or 20-48. Likewise, charter schools can obtain financing through other entities (the Indiana Bond Bank, Indiana Finance Authority, or the local economic development commission) that often includes mortgages on the property. Depending on the process used, transfer of title may not be possible by IPS or the charter school as title in the property may be held by another, private entity, subject to agreements with private financial institutions, or mortgages held by private financial institutions may prohibit transfer of title. Statutory changes may not achieve the desired outcome because the Contract Clauses of both the United States and Indiana Constitutions generally protect the contract rights of non-school entities and financial institutions.

b. Capital Projects Referendum

IPS obtained voter-approved capital projects referendum, which added a levy for IPS buildings beyond the State constitutional property tax levy limits. It is unclear if legal authorization exist to divert referendum funds for a broader purpose to benefit charter schools, when voters may not have approved the diversion at the ballot.

c. Transfer of Staff

Like the transfer of transportation staff, any transfer of facilities staff may require input or approval from the exclusive representative for any classified staff and statutory changes for pension or retirement plan purposes.

III. Governance Model

Modifications of the authority structures for non-Innovation Network Charter schools (*e.g.*, Innovation Charter Schools and Independent Charter Schools) may require additional analysis. Presently, charter schools, and their authorizers, have established agreements between themselves and the State. Through Section 3 of Public Law 189-2023 (S.E.A. 391 (2023)), Indiana Code § 20-24-4-1(a)(5)(A) was amended to allow charters to be approved for up to 15 years (previously it was 7 years). To the extent that the new governance model impacts these contractual rights, legal analysis may be required.