

Hannah Swogger

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Happy Friday, Hannah!

The Indiana General Assembly reconvened on Monday for the 2024 legislative session and are already hard at work getting this short-session started. Tuesday was the deadline for filing all bills in the Senate and Thursday was the deadline to file all bills in the House.

Despite a limit for legislators on introducing no more than five bills this year, keeping up with all of the new legislation is a bit like drinking through a firehose! For a full list of the bills that have been introduced this year, [click here](#). Are there any specific bills or issues that you are interested in that you want us to share more information about? Reply to this email and let me know!

Read below for more updates on what happened at the Statehouse this week.

Have a great weekend!

Sarah

Governor Holcomb's Legislative Priorities



Governor Holcomb

On Tuesday night, Governor Holcomb delivered his eighth and final State of the State address. In it, he highlighted items from his 2024 legislative agenda, calling for commitments to improving third grade reading levels, expanding the child-care workforce and building greater awareness of the state's jobs programs.

To read his full remarks or watch his speech, [click here](#).

You can read Governor Holcomb's 2024 legislative agenda [here](#).

Bills we are paying attention to:



Reading Skills

[SB1, "Reading Skills"](#) was introduced this week to improve the state's literacy rates. This bill would mandate schools to offer summer school to students who do not reach reading proficiency or are at risk based on I-READ assessment scores. There is language included that would increase funding for remediation resources, though there will likely be further discussion on what resources are needed and which ones should be prioritized. There are still exceptions for students who are in special education, have individualized education programs, or who are English language learners.

The bill was just introduced on Thursday, so more information will be shared as it comes available. SB1 has been referred to the Senate Committee on Education.



Cell phones in schools

[SB185, "Student Use of Cellular Phones"](#) was introduced this week. If passed, it would require schools to adopt policies that governs a student's use of a cell phone. This bill follows a similar bill in Michigan and in other countries that have recently passed addressing cell phone usage in schools. While many see the benefits of having phone-free schools, such as academic benefits and social-emotional benefits when free to the technological devices, others argue that cell phones could be used as learning tools, and parents appreciate having a way to communicate with their child due to concerns about school safety.

The bill has been referred to the Senate Committee on Education and Career Development.

[Read more.](#)



Substance Abuse

We were pleased to see legislators have introduced two bills that would address substance abuse and provide support to overdose victims.

[HB1227, "Opioid Overdose Reversal Medication in Schools"](#)

was introduced this week. If passed, this bill would require public schools to stock and maintain at least 1 carton of naloxone nasal spray for every 500 students enrolled in the school. This bill has been referred to the House committee on Education.

[HB1356, "Immunity If Seeking Aid for Drug Overdose Victim"](#)

was introduced this week. If passed, it would apply immunity rights brought from the Lifeline Law to a person under the age of 21 who commits the offense of possession of a controlled substance or paraphernalia. This bill has been referred to the House Committee on Courts and Criminal Code.

[Read more.](#)

If you are interested in receiving training on administering Narcan, a lifesaving opioid antagonist that can reverse the effects of an

overdose, MCCOY is offering a training on January 25 from 1-2pm.

[Register today!](#)



Job Training Scholarships

Last year, when legislators passed a bill that would allow students to receive state funding for job training, they anticipated 1,000 students to participate in the program in the first year-- but only 234 qualifying students were approved for scholarship accounts so far.

To improve participation in the program, this year, lawmakers are hoping to expand the scholarships through [HB1001, "Education and Higher Education Matters"](#) to cover the cost for students to obtain driver's licenses, hoping it can remove the barrier of transportation for prospective program participants.

On Thursday, HB1001 received a hearing in the House Committee on Education and passed 9-4. It has now been referred to the House Committee on Ways and Means.

[Read More](#)

Youth Day at the Statehouse



YOUTH Day At The Statehouse

Bring young people to the Statehouse! Register for FREE today!

We are so excited to see so many people have already registered for the Youth Day at the Statehouse-- please share this opportunity widely. We hope to pack the Statehouse and show lawmakers that youth voices matter and young people belong in the rooms where decisions are made.

[Register today.](#)



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