

LEGISLATIVE SERVICES AGENCY
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To: Glenda Ritz, Superintendent of Public Instruction; President Pro Tempore David Long, Chair of the Legislative Council; Speaker Brian Bosma, Vice-Chair of the Legislative Council; Senator Tim Lanane, Minority Leader of the Senate; Representative Scott Pelath, Minority Leader of the House of Representatives

From: George T. Angelone, Executive Director of the Legislative Services Agency

Re: Preview of Preliminary A-F School Accountability Grades for the 2012-2013 School Year

Date: November 18, 2013

The Legislative Services Agency performed the procedures enumerated below, which were agreed to under a Memorandum of Understanding between the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Legislative Services Agency dated November 8, 2013 ("Memorandum of Understanding"), solely to assist you in determining whether the preliminary "A through F" school, charter school, and school corporation performance accountability scores issued by the Department of Education for the school year beginning July 1, 2012, and ending June 30, 2013 (i.e., "preliminary scores") were calculated in conformity with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements and the practices used by the Department of Education to calculate performance scores in the immediately preceding school year (2011-2012).

Our analysis was conducted in accordance with the same policies, practices, procedures, and methodology applied by the Legislative Services Agency to replicate the final "A through F" school, performance scores calculated by the Department of Education for the immediately preceding school year (2011-2012), as published in the report entitled "Examination of Indiana's A to F Accountability Model" that was submitted to Speaker Brian Bosma and President Pro Tempore David Long by John R. Grew and William J. Sheldrake on September 6, 2013 ("Grew-Sheldrake Report"). The following is a summary of the procedures used and the associated findings for the 2012-2013 preliminary scores:

1. Mathematical performance scores. We independently recalculated the mathematical performance scores for 2,082 schools, including each charter school, using the student data compiled by the Department of Education. We then compared these mathematical performance scores to the mathematical performance scores calculated by the Department of Education. We differed in our calculated preliminary mathematical performance scores from the preliminary mathematical performance scores calculated by the Department of Education for only three schools. We consider the total number of differences not significant compared to the total number of calculations made. The names of schools for which we found differences and our calculations for those schools have been forwarded to the Department of Education.

2. Assignment of letter grades. We independently assigned "A to F" performance grades to 2,082 schools, including each charter school, using the mathematical performance scores that we calculated for that school and the score conversion standards specified in

511 IAC 6.2-6. We then compared these letter grades to the "A to F" performance grades assigned by the Department of Education. We did not differ in any our preliminary "A to F" grade assignments from the preliminary "A to F" performance grades assigned by the Department of Education. None of the differences in preliminary mathematical performance scores resulted in performance grade differences.

Under IC 20-31-8-4, the Department of Education is responsible for classifying schools, compiling the data on which preliminary scores are based, interpreting the applicable law, rules, and State Board of Education directives, calculating mathematical preliminary scores, and assigning preliminary performance grades. The following limitations on our report should be noted:

1. We relied on the classification assigned by the Department of Education to a school to determine the appropriate performance formula to apply to each school. The Grew-Sheldrake Report noted that the three primary configurations for evaluating schools are: elementary/middle school, high school and combined school, but the administrative rule recognizes that some schools are not composed of standard grades and thus the rule addresses alternative models for some of these schools. We observed that some schools were placed in a different class for the purposes of calculating performance scores for the 2012-2013 school year than the class in which they were placed for the 2011-2012 school year. The Department of Education indicates that these changes were made pursuant to a policy directive adopted by the State Board of Education on October 2, 2013. A record of the Board action is available at <http://media.doe.in.gov/sbe/2013-10.html>. We were not requested to and did not conduct a review or an audit of the correctness of the classification assigned by the Department of Education to each school.

2. We relied on the tables of student data compiled by the Department of Education to calculate preliminary scores. We were not requested to and did not conduct a review or an audit of the underlying student data in the tables or the procedures used to compile the tables.

Had we performed additional procedures, other matters might have come to our attention that would have been reported to you. It is our understanding that schools (including charter schools) and school corporations will be given an opportunity to appeal errors in classification, interpretation of applicable law, rules, and State Board of Education directives, student data compiled in the tables, preliminary mathematical scores, and preliminary performance grade assignments.

The policy of the Department of Education and the State Board of Education is to keep confidential ("embargo") preliminary scores until the appeals period ends and the State Board of Education adopts final scores. The only other parties that are given access to the preliminary scores are the schools, charter schools, and school corporations eligible to appeal the preliminary scores. In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding and the policies of the Department of Education and the State Board of Education, we will maintain the confidentiality of the preliminary scores.