

INDIANA  
**COLLEGE  
READINESS**  
REPORT  
2022



## COVID-19 Pandemic Accelerated Indiana’s Declining College Enrollment

Exacerbated by the pandemic, the decline in Indiana’s college-going rate for recent high school graduates has accelerated. This presents stark challenges which must be addressed with urgency and thoughtfulness. Fewer Hoosiers are pursuing education or training after high school. The state’s college-going rate fell from 59 percent for the high school class of 2019 to 53 percent for the class of 2020. This is by far the lowest rate—and sharpest decline—in

at least a generation and follows a previous height of 65 percent in 2015. This also follows a national trend of declines in the going rate and enrollment but Indiana’s decline is steeper than the national average. By college, we mean the full range of credentials beyond high school from a one-year certificate and up.

State and national research clearly and consistently show how valuable education beyond high school is, including through wages, civic participation and quality of life. Educational attainment is reflected in key economic and workforce data, including unemployment, labor participation, wages and net worth. These are key economic and workforce measures that illustrate the value of education beyond high school.

Our educational attainment is not close enough to where it needs to be. If we want the jobs of today and tomorrow to be filled with talented Hoosiers who have the skills and abilities to prosper personally and professionally, then we must get more young adults to enroll in training and education beyond high school.

Experts have identified Indiana as the state most

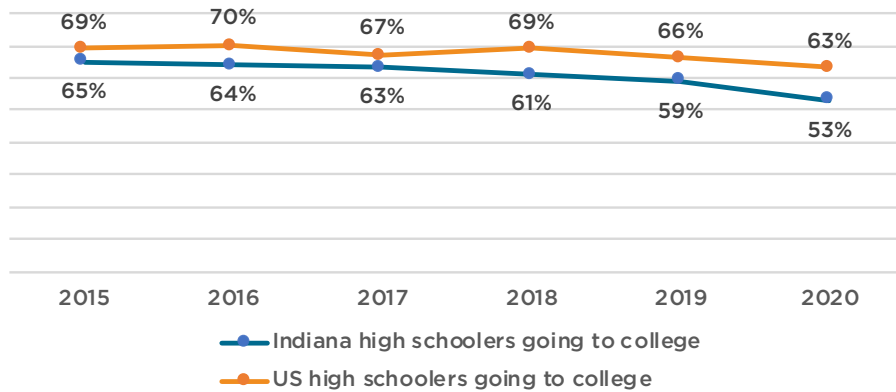
at risk of job loss due to automation and artificial intelligence. Nearly two million working-age Hoosiers do not have postsecondary credentials. And Indiana’s employers are

raising the alarm.

Enter 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic added fuel to a national fire that was already burning—one of doubt about the value of higher education, particularly considering the cost (even when offset by generous financial aid Indiana provides).

Hoosiers who suffered most from the economic impact were people with lower levels of education—especially those without more than a high school diploma. However, that realization was and continues to be outweighed by an

**Indiana’s college-going rate is dropping — and falling behind the nation**



economy that is now desperate for workers and offering high wages for lower-skill employment.

As Indiana continues to look beyond traditional approaches to reach more learners—both youth and adults—it will take an extensive effort, built on promising policies, programs and partnerships, to stem the college-going decline and ensure all Hoosiers not only have access to the benefits that postsecondary education provides but also recognize its value.

We lose something intrinsic when too few receive education beyond high school. Education is basic to civil society. And it should provide the opportunity of prosperity for all people. It is imperative to promote the value of education beyond high school to achieve not only the narrower goal of increasing student enrollment and successful completion to enter the world of work—but the broader goal of ensuring an educated and prosperous society.

**Urgency around equity**

This report points to alarming educational trends, particularly the continued inequity of which students are prepared for and enroll in college based on demographic factors that include race and ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status and the type of area in which they live.

ECONOMIC METRICS BY EDUCATION LEVEL				
EDUCATION LEVEL	UNEMPLOYMENT RATE	INDIANA LABOR PARTICIPATION RATE	WAGES – MEDIAN INCOME (U.S.) (2019)	WEALTH – AVERAGE NET WORTH (U.S.) (2019)
LESS THAN A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	6.4%	42.3%	\$30,950	\$137,800
HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA	4.4%	57.0%	\$39,050	\$305,200
SOME COLLEGE OR ASSOCIATE DEGREE	2.6%	65.3%	\$44,850	\$376,400
BACHELOR’S DEGREE + UP	0.9%	73.0%	\$72,000	\$1,519,900

Indiana’s Black students, who already had a low college-going rate, decreased the most since the start of the pandemic, with a 7-percentage-point decrease between 2019 and 2020 (50 percent to 43 percent, respectively). Hispanic and Latino students were 5 percentage points less likely to go to college after the pandemic (49 percent to 44 percent, respectively).

Family wealth plays a major role in whether a young person goes to college. Less than 40 percent of Hoosier youth who come from families that qualify for the federal free and reduced lunch (FRL) school program go straight to college (roughly less than \$34,000 for a family of two qualify for FRL). Over 61 percent of Hoosiers with family incomes above the FRL threshold go straight to college.

Men also go to college at much lower rates than women and that gap continues to widen, too. Sixty-one percent of women in 2020 went to college, compared to 46 percent of men. There is a special section in the pages that follow focusing on this persistent yet expanding gender gap.

## Indiana is up to the challenge

These are tough challenges that states around the country must tackle head on. I believe Indiana is not only up to the task, but that there is an imperative that we do so with full and robust commitment and action.

How do we go about it? We continue working closely alongside Indiana's higher education institutions to tackle important issues around the affordability of higher education, career relevance in coursework, and the quality of degrees and degree programs. And we push back on the negative perceptions of education beyond high school with a positive message by turning to Hoosiers' trusted messengers—teachers, school counselors, employers, coaches, family, friends, community partners, faith leaders, public leaders, philanthropists and any Hoosier willing to add voice to this challenge—to help spread the word, providing them the resources and equipping them with the necessary tools to take this message far and wide. In addition, other recommendations follow in this report.



More than 1,200 Hoosiers were recently surveyed to gauge the perception of higher education in Indiana. When asked, 82 percent responded that they “feel favorable about higher education.” This tells us higher education is at a tipping point but there is opportunity to fortify it. It will take concerted, strategic effort to ensure Indiana continues to build and provide a system of education and training beyond high school that is beneficial to students, employers, communities and the great Hoosier state in terms of economic and social prosperity.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris R. Lowery". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline.

**Chris R. Lowery**  
Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education

### Know and understand your data: Online College Readiness Dashboard

Another important action step for all Hoosiers is to know and understand data that impacts their lives. See the Commission's NEW online dashboard and search historical data through 2008 and filter by state, county, school corporation and individual schools. When comparing college-going rates, the best way to gauge rates is to look at individual school, corporation or county rates over time, as opposed to comparing individual schools, corporations or counties among each other.



<https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/che.staff/viz/ReadinessBreakoutDashboard/Scorecard>

# Key Takeaways

**Indiana's college-going rate decreased significantly in 2020, largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, falling to 53 percent.** This rate has fallen 12 percentage points in five years. Every demographic breakout in the Commission's data saw declines in college-going rates for the 2020-21 academic year, including race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender and geography.

**Four thousand fewer Indiana high school graduates went straight to college in 2020-21 than in 2019-20.** The year-over-year enrollment drop was borne almost entirely by Indiana's public colleges. Nearly the same number of Indiana high schoolers went to private and out-of-state colleges as did in the previous year.

**Despite the challenges, encouraging indicators show a stronger likelihood for students to go on to education beyond high school continue to hold true, including:**

- Students who are in the 21st Century Scholars program: 21st Century Scholars are almost 30 percentage

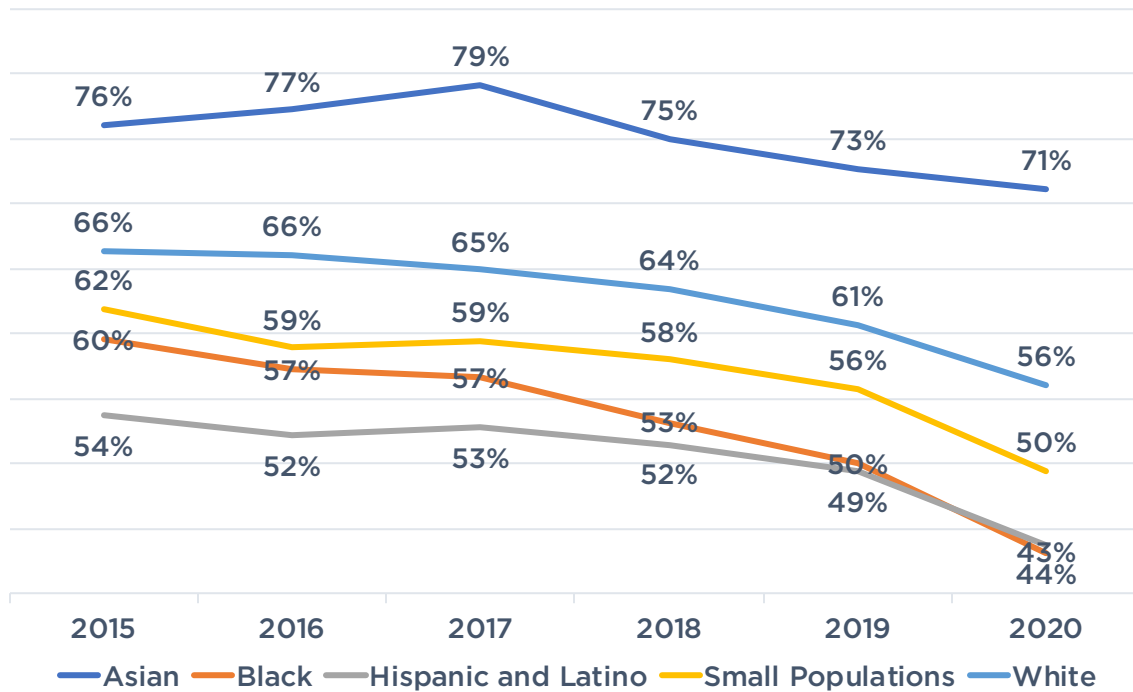
points more likely to go to college than the statewide average (81 percent compared to 53 percent).

- Students earning dual credit: 62 percent of such students went to college in 2020.
- Students who earn the Academic Honors diploma: Of the high school graduating class of 2020, 86 percent of Academic Honors diploma earners went to college, compared to under 40 percent of Core 40 earners and just over 9 percent of students who earned a General Diploma.
- Women and non-rural students (college-going rates):
  - Women: 61 percent (Men: 46 percent)
  - Non-rural: 54 percent (Rural: 49 percent)

**Equity gaps remain—or worsened during the pandemic—for many student groups, including by income and by race and ethnicity.**

- Students on free and reduced lunch plans declined 6 percentage points, compared to a 4-percentage-point decline for higher-income students.
- Black high school graduates saw the largest decline (7 percentage points) in going straight to college between 2019 and 2020, followed closely by Hispanic/Latino students and students representing Small Populations.

**BLACK STUDENTS SAW THE LARGEST DECLINE IN COLLEGE-GOING RATE BEFORE AND DURING THE PANDEMIC**



# Calls to Action by Sector

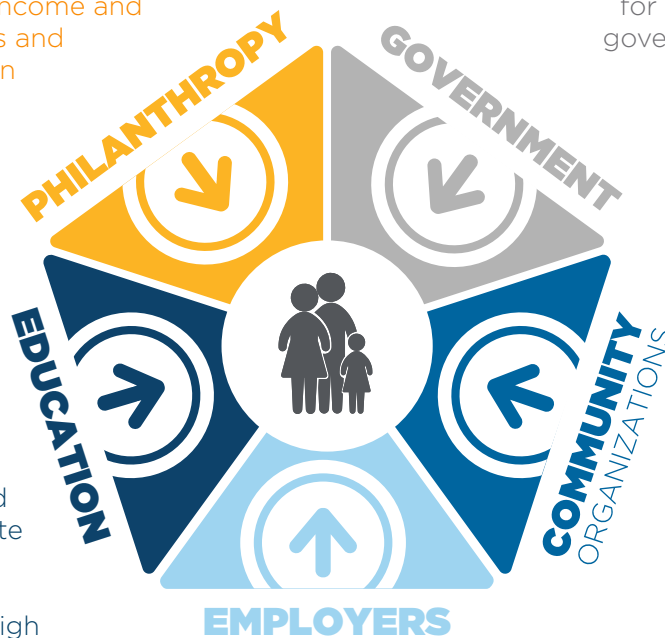
Along with the policy actions and strategies listed on pages 16-17, there are opportunities for employers, community organizations, those in government, education and philanthropy to take specific steps to help stem the college-going decline. This is not an exhaustive list by any means but is intended to highlight how other sectors can get involved.

► **Philanthropy:** Partner with education, employers, government and community organizations to provide thought leadership and resources to reach low-income and first-generation students and encourage them to attain education beyond high school.

► **Government:** Elevating the importance of education and training beyond high school has never been more critical for Indiana’s future. State and local governments must continue to fund higher education institutions to incentivize and prioritize outcomes such as getting students in the door and across the finish line of graduation.

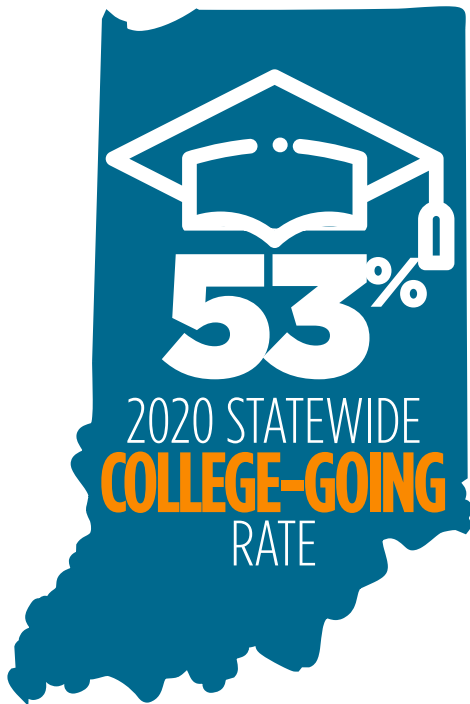
► **K-12 and posecondary education:** Ensure students are aware of the full range of education and training options beyond high school and are prepared by taking the appropriate diploma and degree pathways. Make certain program offerings are high quality and career relevant.

► **Community organizations:** Promote Indiana’s financial aid programs and the value of higher education to students and families by partnering with the Commission. Help reach youth and adults who are being missed.



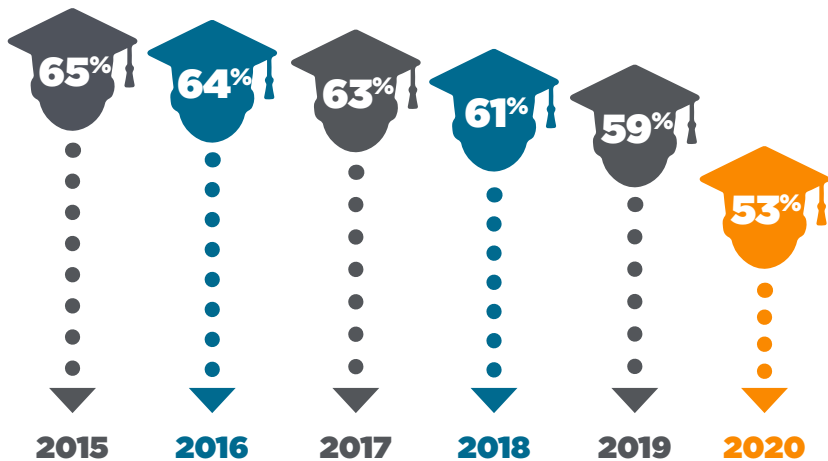
► **Employers:** Proactively work with Indiana’s K-12 and higher education organizations to clearly articulate what skills and experience workplaces require for the jobs of today and tomorrow. In addition, employers can take any number of actions to stem the college-going decline, including:

- Grow local work-based learning opportunities for students (which in turn helps create a regional talent pipeline)
- Encourage financial aid literacy for employees and their families (help employees open 529 savings plans for their children or file the FAFSA)
- Create or scale up tuition reimbursement and on-the-job training programs (the state’s Employer Training Grant provides free job training for employers)



### HIGH SCHOOLERS GOING STRAIGHT TO COLLEGE

Pandemic Worsened Indiana's College-Going Decline



Fewer Hoosiers sought education beyond high school in 2020-2021 than in any time in Indiana's recent history.

### INDIANA COLLEGE CORE

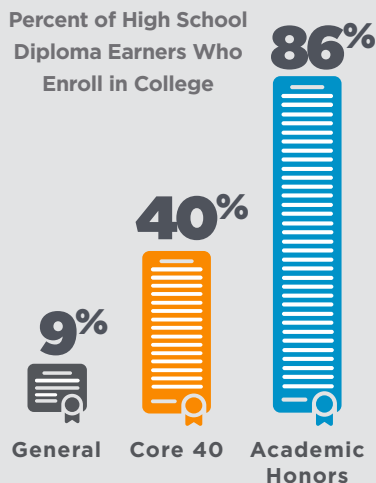


**1,802**  
High School Seniors

1,802 students earned the Indiana College Core in 2020, up from 1,638 in 2019. The Indiana College Core is a 30-hour block of credits that transfers among all of Indiana's public institutions.

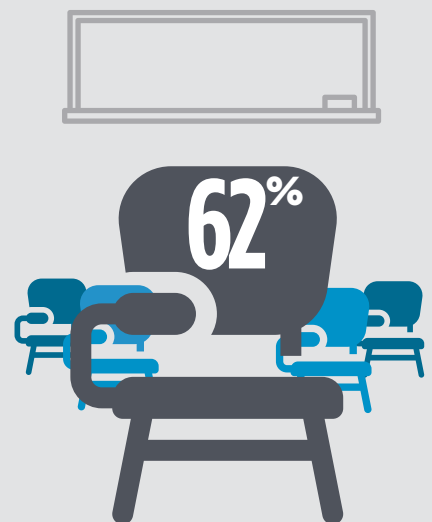
### HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA TYPE

Academic Honors diploma earners are far more likely to go to college.



### EARLY COLLEGE CREDIT

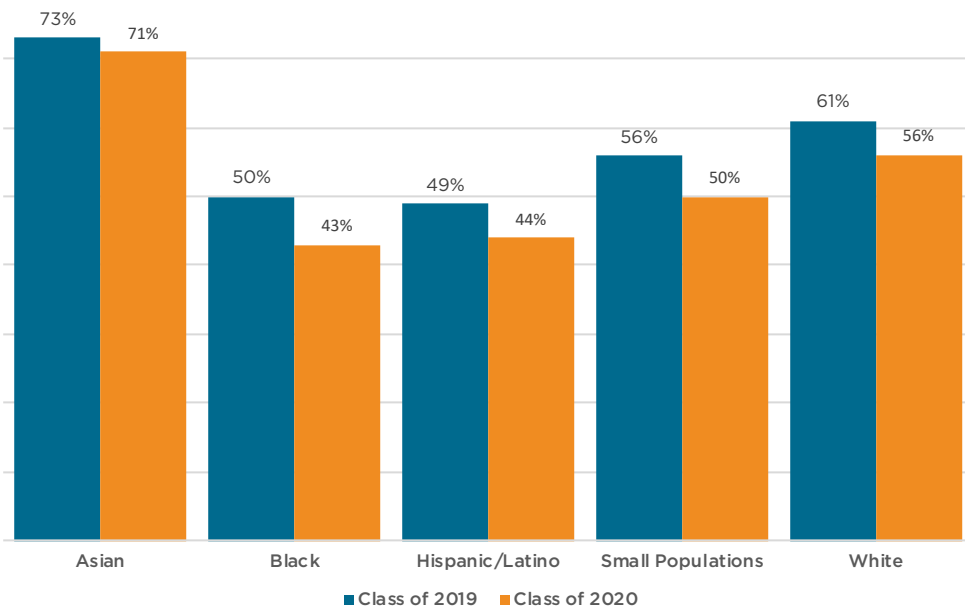
62% of 2020 high school graduates had some form of early college credit, such as dual credit or Advanced Placement.





### COLLEGE EQUITY AND ACCESS

All races and ethnicities declined in college-going rates, but at different rates. Racial and ethnic gaps grew as a result.



### COVID-19

impacted Indiana's graduating high school class of 2020 and enrollment trends deviated in numerous ways throughout the first year of the pandemic.

Today, more Hoosiers still go to college than the number of those who do not. In 2020, more than 35,600 high school graduates did not enroll in any form of college.

*"College" covers the range of education options beyond a high school diploma, including credentials of less than one year up through a four-year degree.*

Overall, fewer low-income students went to college during 2020 than higher-income students.

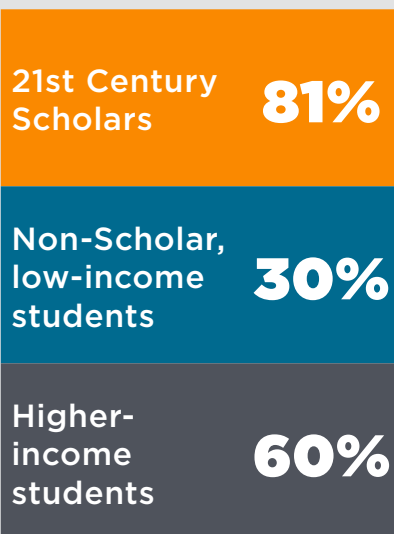
### GEOGRAPHY GAP

Rural students are less likely to go to college than non-rural students.



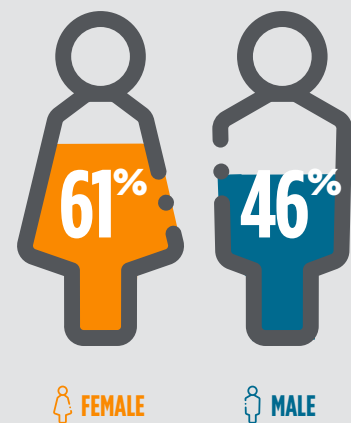
### SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

21st Century Scholars are nearly **three times** as likely to go to college as their low-income peers.



### GENDER GAP

#### College-Going



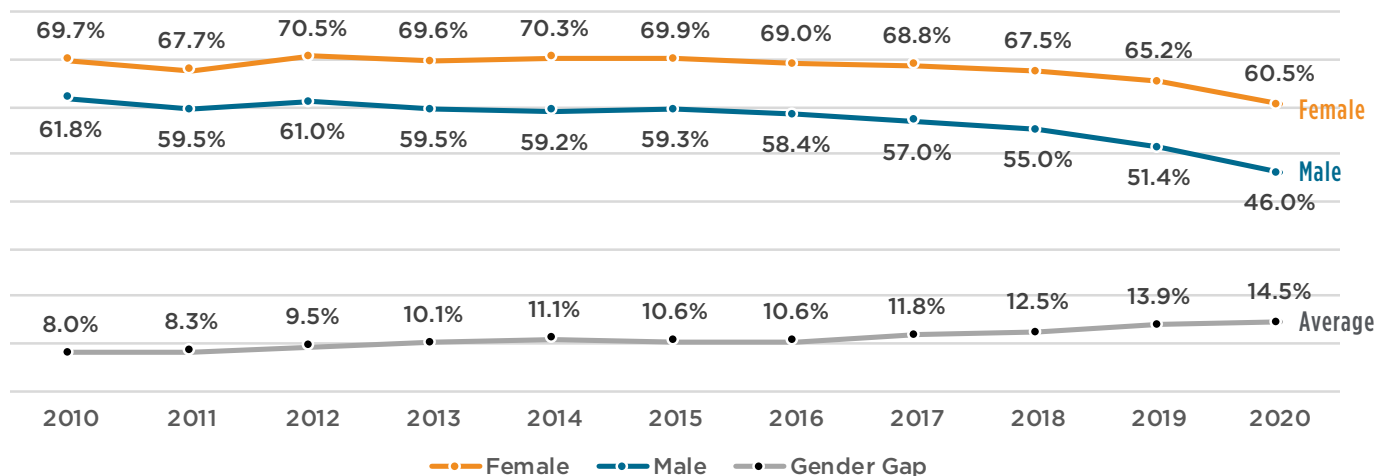
Women are far more likely to go to college than men and the gap continues to widen.



## Gender Gaps

**MORE WOMEN THAN MEN GO TO COLLEGE IN INDIANA, AND THE GAP IS WIDENING**

College-Going Rate by Gender



## MORE WOMEN THAN MEN EARN ACADEMIC HONORS DIPLOMAS

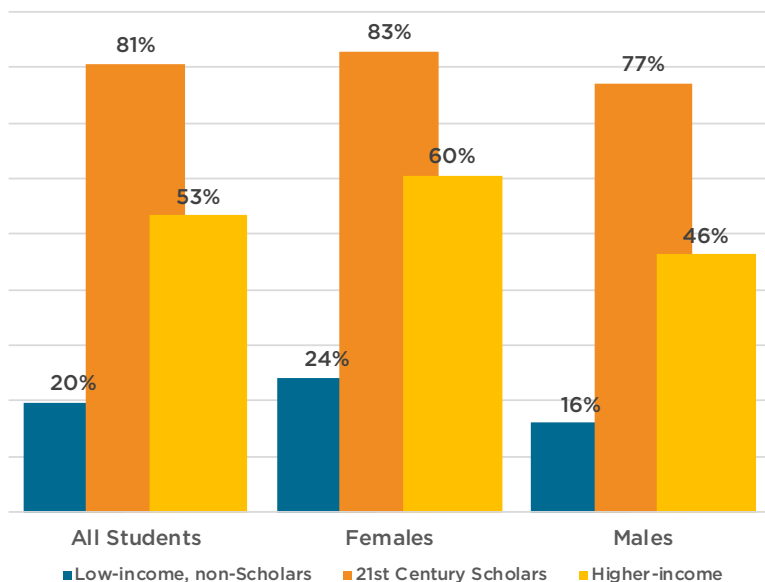
Students who earn the state’s most rigorous high school diploma are more likely to go to college. **Women out-earn these diplomas over their male peers by 15 percentage points.**

Men are more likely to earn Core 40 or General diplomas, but when men do earn Academic Honors diplomas, they go to college at nearly the same rate as women (84% and 87%, respectively).

## 21ST CENTURY SCHOLARS ARE PREDOMINANTLY WOMEN

21st Century Scholars exceed the college-going rates of their peers (81% to 53%). Within the 21st Century Scholars program, women go to college at a higher rate than their male counterparts, **83%** to **77%**, respectively.

21st Century College-Going Rates by Gender



## DEGREE PROGRAM SELECTION VARIES BY GENDER

1 out of 4 women choose health professions, while 1 out of 5 men choose business management professions.

Men are also more likely to choose a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) major than women — **though this gap is closing.**

**W**

Major Title	#of Majors	Percent of Women
Health Professions	4,963	24.5%
Liberal Arts and Sciences	3,011	14.9%
Education	1,860	9.2%
Business Management	1,793	8.9%
Biological/ Biomedical Sciences	1,726	8.5%
Psychology	1,432	7.1%
All Others	5,460	27.0%

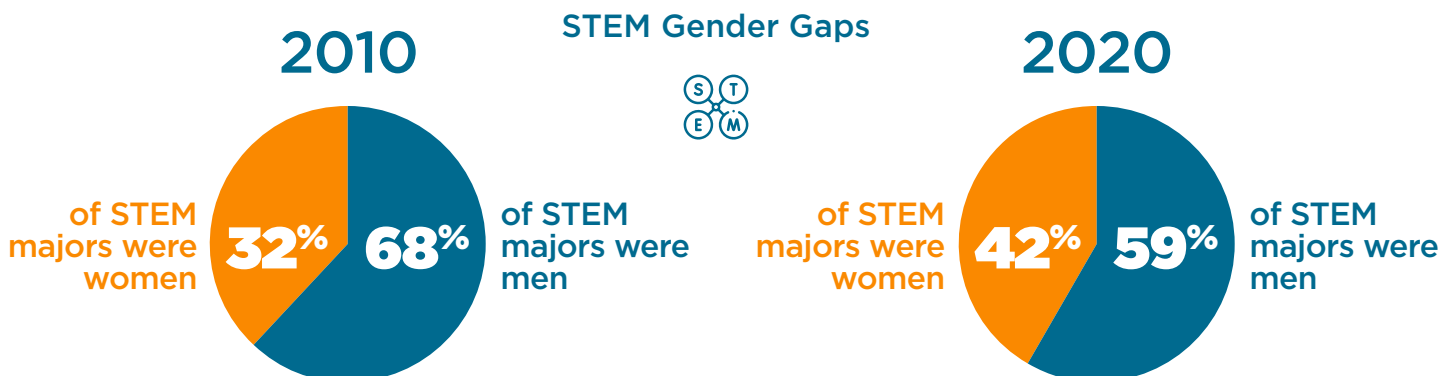
## INDIANA'S STEM EDUCATION GENDER GAP HAS BEEN REDUCED BY HALF OVER A DECADE

A decade ago, over twice as many men as women in Indiana pursued a STEM major. That gap is smaller now; however this is due to a simultaneous decline in men pursuing STEM majors and a modest increase for women.

**M**


Major Title	#of Majors	Percent of Men
Business, Management, Marketing	2,824	19.1%
Liberal Arts and Sciences	2,387	16.1%
Computer and Information Sciences	1,433	9.7%
Engineering	1,223	8.3%
Engineering Technologies	820	5.5%
Biological/ Biomedical Sciences	774	5.2%
All Others	5,350	36.1%


**Indiana and the nation require more students prepared with STEM education to fill the job needs of today and the future.**



## COLLEGE GOING (within a year of high school graduation)

Note: All "One-year trend" columns in the following pages refer to the column that is immediately adjacent to the left.

 <b>High School Graduates Enrolling in College</b>				
Breakdown	# of HS Graduates	# Enrolled in College	% Enrolled in College	One-year trend (2019-2020)
<b>High School Diploma Type</b>				
Honors	27,801	23,829	85.7%	↓
Core 40	41,216	16,214	39.3%	↓
General	7,309	678	9.3%	↓
<b>High School Graduation Waiver Status</b>				
Graduated with Waiver	139	43	30.9%	↑
Graduated without Waiver	76,187	40,678	53.4%	↓
<b>Advanced Placement Status</b>				
Took and Passed an AP Test	13,859	12,019	86.7%	↓
Took but Did Not Pass an AP Test	10,571	8,243	78.0%	↓
Did Not Take an AP Test	51,896	20,459	39.4%	↓
<b>Dual Credit Status</b>				
Earned Dual Credit from an Indiana Public College	44,742	29,979	67.0%	↓
Did Not Earn Dual Credit from an Indiana Public College	31,584	10,742	34.0%	↓
<b>21st Century Scholars Status</b>				
21st Century Scholar	7,427	5,986	80.6%	↓
Non-21st Century Scholar	68,899	34,735	50.4%	↓
<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>				
Free or Reduced Lunch	27,695	10,975	39.6%	↓
Non-Free or Reduced Lunch	48,631	29,746	61.2%	↓
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
White	53,659	30,096	56.1%	↓
Black	8,623	3,724	43.2%	↓
Hispanic or Latino	8,606	3,769	43.8%	↓
Asian	2,040	1,451	71.1%	↓
Small Populations	3,398	1,681	49.5%	↓
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	38,795	23,461	60.5%	↓
Male	37,531	17,260	46.0%	↓
<b>All Students</b>	<b>76,326</b>	<b>40,721</b>	<b>53.4%</b>	↓

 <b>High School Graduates Enrollment by College Type</b>			
College Type	# of HS Graduates	% of Total HS Graduates	One-year trend (2019-2020)
Indiana Public College	29,238	38.3%	↓
Indiana Private College (non-profit)	6,062	7.9%	↓
Indiana Private College (for-profit)	0	0.0%	—
Out-of-State Public College	2,880	3.8%	↓
Out-of-State Private College (non-profit)	2,333	3.1%	—
Out-of-State Private College (for-profit)	153	0.2%	—
Non-degree Granting School	1	0.0%	—
Indiana State-Affiliated Public	54	0.1%	—
<b>Did Not Enroll in College</b>	<b>35,605</b>	<b>46.6%</b>	↑

## INDIANA PUBLIC COLLEGE ENROLLMENT



### Indiana Public College Enrollment by College

College	# Enrolled in IN Public College	% of Total Enrolled in IN Public College	One-year trend (2019-2020)
Ball State University	2,996	10.2%	↓
Indiana State University	1,298	4.4%	↑
University of Southern Indiana	1,036	3.5%	↓
Indiana University-Bloomington	4,392	15.0%	↑
Indiana University-East	227	0.8%	–
Indiana University-Kokomo	532	1.8%	↑
Indiana University-Northwest	552	1.9%	↑
Indiana University-Purdue University-Indianapolis	3,225	11.0%	↓
Indiana University-South Bend	609	2.1%	↓
Indiana University-Southeast	520	1.8%	↓
Purdue University-Fort Wayne	1,134	3.9%	↓
Purdue University-Northwest	809	2.8%	↓
Purdue University-Polytechnic Statewide	97	0.3%	–
Purdue University-West Lafayette	4,023	13.8%	↑
Ivy Tech Community College	6,786	23.2%	↓
Vincennes University	1,002	3.4%	↓



### Indiana Public College Enrollment by Degree Type

Degree Type	# Enrolled in IN Public College	% of Total Enrolled in IN Public College	One-year trend (2019-2020)
Bachelor's Degree (four-year)	21,222	72.6%	↑
Associate Degree (two-year)	6,310	21.6%	↓
Award of at least 1 but less than 2 academic years	978	3.3%	–
Award of less than 1 academic year	577	2.0%	↑
Unclassified undergraduate	151	0.5%	↑



### Indiana Public College Enrollment by Program Type


Program Type	# Enrolled in IN Public College	% of Total Enrolled in IN Public College	One-year trend (2019-2020)
Arts and Humanities	3,981	13.6%	↓
Business and Communication	4,580	15.7%	–
Education	1,817	6.2%	↑
Health	4,814	16.5%	↓
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM)	7,164	24.5%	↑
Social and Behavioral Sciences and Human Services	3,260	11.1%	↑
Trades	1,791	6.1%	↓
Undecided	1,831	6.3%	↓




### Indiana Public College Enrollment by Status


Status	# of HS Graduates	# Enrolled in College	One-year trend (2019-2020)
Full-Time Students	24,074	82.3%	↓
Part-Time Students	5,164	17.7%	↓

## ACADEMIC PREPARATION

 <b>Indiana Public College Remediation by Subject</b>						
Subject	# Enrolled in IN Public College	% of Total Enrolled in IN Public College	One-year trend (2019-2020)	# Earning Remedial Credits	% Earning Remedial Credits	One-year trend (2019-2020)
Math Only	1,411	4.8%	↓	904	64.1%	↓
English/Language Arts Only	365	1.2%	↓	193	52.9%	↓
Both Math and English/Language	100	0.3%	↓	45	45.0%	↓
No Remediation	27,362	93.6%	↓	--	--	↓

 <b>Indiana Public College Students Needing Remediation</b>							
Breakdown	# Enrolled in IN Public College	# Needing Remediation	% Needing Remediation	One-year trend (2019-2020)	# Earning Remedial Credits	% Earning Remedial Credits	One-year trend (2019-2020)
<b>High School Diploma Type</b>							
Honors	16,608	388	2.3%	↑	317	1.9%	—
Core 40	12,138	1,373	11.3%	↓	774	6.4%	↓
General	492	115	23.4%	↓	51	10.4%	↓
<b>High School Graduation Waiver Status</b>							
Graduated with Waiver	33	4	12.1%	↓			
Graduated without Waiver	29,205	1,872	6.4%	↓			
<b>Advanced Placement Status</b>							
Took and Passed an AP Test	8,246	116	1.4%	↓	89	1.1%	↓
Took but Did Not Pass an AP Test	5,938	284	4.8%	↓	203	3.4%	↓
Did Not Take an AP Test	15,054	1,476	9.8%	↓	850	5.6%	↓
<b>Dual Credit Status</b>							
Earned Dual Credit from an Indiana Public College	21,741	1,081	5.0%	↓	714	3.3%	↓
Did Not Earn Dual Credit from an Indiana Public College	7,497	795	10.6%	↓	428	5.7%	↓
<b>21st Century Scholars Status</b>							
21st Century Scholar	4,855	402	8.3%	↓	237	4.9%	↓
Non-21st Century Scholar	24,383	1,474	6.0%	↓	905	3.7%	↓
<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>							
Free or Reduced Lunch	8,294	778	9.4%	↓	392	4.7%	↓
Non-Free or Reduced Lunch	20,944	1,098	5.2%	↓	750	3.6%	↓
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>							
White	21,553	1,224	5.7%	↓	799	3.7%	↓
Black	2,463	316	12.8%	↓	138	5.6%	↓
Hispanic or Latino	2,911	208	7.1%	↓	119	4.1%	↓
Asian	1,099	40	3.6%	↓	30	2.7%	↓
Small Populations	1,212	88	7.3%	↓	56	4.6%	↓
<b>Gender</b>							
Female	16,926	1,200	7.1%	↓	729	4.3%	↓
Male	12,312	676	5.5%	↓	413	3.4%	↓
<b>Average</b>	<b>29,238</b>	<b>1,876</b>	<b>6.4%</b>	<b>↓</b>	<b>1,142</b>	<b>3.9%</b>	<b>↓</b>

## STUDENT PERFORMANCE

 <b>Indiana Public College Student Performance</b>				
Breakdown	# Enrolled in IN Public College	Average Freshman Year GPA	Average Freshman Credit Hours Earned	One-year trend (2019-2020)
<b>High School Diploma Type</b>				
Honors	16,608	3.1	26.47	↓
Core 40	12,138	2.2	15.74	↓
General	492	1.9	7.47	↓
<b>High School Graduation Waiver Status</b>				
Graduated with Waiver	33	2.2	10.74	↓
Graduated without Waiver	29,205	2.7	21.71	↓
<b>Advanced Placement Status</b>				
Took and Passed an AP Test	8,246	3.2	27.80	↓
Took but Did Not Pass an AP Test	5,938	2.7	23.34	↓
Did Not Take an AP Test	15,054	2.4	17.70	↓
<b>Dual Credit Status</b>				
Earned Dual Credit from an Indiana Public College	21,741	2.8	23.18	↓
Did Not Earn Dual Credit from an Indiana Public College	7,497	2.3	17.38	↓
<b>21st Century Scholars Status</b>				
21st Century Scholar	4,855	2.4	21.30	↓
Non-21st Century Scholar	24,383	2.8	21.77	↓
<b>Socioeconomic Status</b>				
Free or Reduced Lunch	8,294	2.3	17.89	↓
Non-Free or Reduced Lunch	20,944	2.9	23.20	↓
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>				
White	21,553	2.8	22.49	↓
Black	2,463	2.1	16.23	↓
Hispanic or Latino	2,911	2.5	19.15	↓
Asian	1,099	3.1	26.72	↓
Small Populations	1,212	2.5	20.11	↓
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	16,926	2.8	21.88	↓
Male	12,312	2.7	21.44	↓
<b>All Students</b>	<b>29,238</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>21.69</b>	↓

# Recommendations

Policymakers, school administrators, higher education institutions and others concerned about the state's continued decline in the college-going rate can view and analyze longitudinal data by school, corporation and county, by visiting the Commission's online data dashboard or by visiting [www.che.in.gov/readiness](http://www.che.in.gov/readiness).

- **Return the Frank O'Bannon Grant amounts to pre-Great Recession levels.** The O'Bannon Grant annually helps more than 30,000 Hoosiers afford postsecondary education. The grant is available to students attending both public and private colleges. Although the O'Bannon Grant provides generous aid, the program was cut significantly during the Great Recession and amounts have yet to recover. The Commission seeks to increase the maximum O'Bannon Grant award by 35% to bring the award back to 2008-09 levels when adjusting for inflation.
- **Auto-enroll all eligible students into the 21st Century Scholars program.** The 21st Century Scholars program is a proven way to help more Hoosiers enroll and graduate from college. Yet too few students sign up for the program—less than half of eligible students currently enroll. The state and its partners spend significant resources encouraging students to sign up. Auto-enrolling financially eligible students for the 21st Century Scholars program will free up these resources and will lead to more Hoosiers enrolling in, and affording, college. Educators, K-12 and the Commission can focus on helping scholars meet requirements and be prepared for college. Expanding Indiana's financial aid program will increase costs over time, but the Commission estimates that this investment in the state's workforce will ultimately pay for itself in economic growth.
- **Require high school seniors to file the FAFSA. To receive financial aid, students must fill out the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) each year.** Yet many students do not file it until too late, often missing out on funding from the state and private entities for that year. Until they submit the FAFSA, students and their families cannot know how much they will have to pay for college. Therefore, the more students who file the FAFSA, and the earlier in the year they do it, the better. The Commission renews its call for a requirement—with a broad opt-out provision—that high school seniors must file the FAFSA before graduating.
- **Increase the availability and strategic use of dual credit and quadruple the number of high school seniors that earn the Indiana College Core by 2028.** Students who earn dual credit or Advanced Placement are more likely to go to college and succeed while there. The Indiana College Core, a block of 30 general education credits that can be transferred to and accepted at colleges across the state, is one way for students to seamlessly transfer. Through dual credit, roughly 1,800 high schoolers earn the Indiana College Core annually.



Increasing availability of dual credit, and careful use of it, can help more high schoolers earn the Indiana College Core. However, not enough schools offer a full range of early college credit opportunities. The Commission recommends educators take full advantage of free credentialing opportunities through the STEM Teach and Teach Dual Credit initiatives and calls for greater financial incentives for teachers to provide dual credits.

- **Provide affordable, quality and career relevant opportunities to students.** To turn Indiana's declining college-going rate around, the state and its partners must strengthen the return on investment that Hoosiers get from higher education. This begins by providing financial aid and guidance to help more students afford to enroll. The Commission for Higher Education can help ensure educational quality by working with its K-12 partners to prepare high school students with the tools needed to succeed. Finally, connecting higher education with employers and embedding workplace learning will help students on whatever postsecondary path they choose.
- **Consider revising the state's higher education outcomes-based funding formula to build on recent successes.** Indiana's outcomes-based funding formula financially rewards colleges for improving student outcomes. These include funding for ensuring students graduate within adequate timeframes and encouraging them to graduate in high-impact fields like science and engineering. Over the past five years, on-time completion has increased 12 percentage points. As the Commission looks toward the next decade of higher education outcomes, it must look to incentivize outcomes that further the strategic role of higher education in Indiana's economic prosperity.
- **Communicate the value of higher education.** Changing the narrative around the value of college will require consistent action on the part of Indiana's institutions and the state, and a reclaiming of the storyline. Trusted messengers should carry the message that education beyond high school is valuable and attainable for Indiana's high schoolers. The Commission has undertaken extensive research to better understand the thoughts and feelings Hoosiers have about higher education and is currently rolling out a series of trainings to equip messengers with the tools and language strategy to better reach both youth and adult learners. Any group willing to receive such training should contact the Commission at [www.che.in.gov](http://www.che.in.gov).
- **Encourage all students to participate in the Scholar Success Program (SSP), even if they are not in the 21st Century Scholars program.** SSP helps prepare students in the 21st Century Scholars program for college activities while in high school, such as creating a graduation plan, watching videos, filing the FAFSA, visiting college campuses, getting workplace experience, etc. All students can benefit from these activities.

## DATA NOTES

Data Sources: Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE); Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), National Student Clearinghouse (NSC)

High School Graduates (“Students”): Count of Indiana high school graduates are based on the IDOE-GR report for 2020. The IDOE-GR report includes public schools, accredited nonpublic schools and third-party accredited choice nonpublic schools. Graduate counts are the number of students who graduated in a certain year regardless of how long it took to graduate, and are not cohort graduate counts, which are based on when a student started high school. Thus, Readiness Report figures may not match cohort graduate figures reported in other places, such as IDOE INview. SOURCE: IDOE

Socioeconomic Status: Enrollment status in the Federal Free and Reduced-Price School Meals (FRL) program during a student’s senior year in high school. FRL status is generally used to indicate a student comes from a low-income household. Where noted, socioeconomic status may be broken into three distinct groups: students who participated in the FRL program during senior year but did not graduate as a 21st Century Scholar; students who graduated as a 21st Century Scholar (most of whom were FRL participants during senior year and nearly all of whom were FRL in middle school); and non-FRL, non-Scholar students, who may also be referred to as middle or higher income students. SOURCE: CHE, IDOE

High School Diploma Type: High school diploma type received upon high school graduation. Honors represents students who received an Academic Honors Diploma, an Academic and Technical Honors Diploma, or an International Baccalaureate Diploma. Core 40 represents students who received a Core 40 Diploma or a Technical Honors Diploma. Technical Honors are grouped with Core 40 in part because their college-going rates are closer to those of Core 40 recipients than to Academic Honors recipients. SOURCE: IDOE

College Enrollment: Students reported as enrolled in postsecondary education, regardless of institution type, within the year following high school graduation (e.g., for 2020 high school graduates, postsecondary enrollment is counted for 2020-21 school year). Student were considered enrolled only if: a) they were enrolled as a degree- or certificate-seeking undergraduate student and b) they were enrolled for the equivalent of at least one semester during the school year. SOURCES: NSC, CHE

Indiana College Core: Formerly known as the Statewide Transfer General Education Core (STGEC), the Indiana College Core consists of 30 credit

hours of general education credit. Once completed, the Indiana College Core can be transferred as a block to any public institution and some private institutions. Rural/non-rural: Identifies whether a county falls within a Metropolitan Area established by the Office of Management and Budget. Any county that is not a part of a Metropolitan..

Dual Credit Status: Students who earned credit hours awarded by Indiana public colleges that were recognized by both the high school and the postsecondary institution. Dual credit calculations only include credits awarded by Indiana public institutions. SOURCE: CHE

Full-time/Part-time Enrollment Status: Full-time enrollment defined as enrolled in 12 or more credits in the semester of entry at an Indiana public college. Part-time enrollment defined as enrolled in fewer than 12 credits in the semester of entry at an Indiana public college. SOURCE: CHE

Remediation Enrollment: Represents Indiana public college students identified as deficient in the general competencies necessary for regular postsecondary curriculum in English/language arts and/or mathematics. Students enrolled in both credit and non-credit remedial coursework are included in remediation totals. SOURCE: CHE

Remediation Success: Indiana public college students who successfully complete the subject(s) in which they were identified as needing remediation. Students who were identified as needing remediation in both English/ language arts and math needed to successfully complete both English/language arts and math to be counted as earning remedial credit. SOURCE: CHE

Freshman GPA: Cumulative grade point average for the latest term of enrollment at an Indiana public college in the year following high school graduation. SOURCE: CHE

Freshman Credit Hours Earned: Average number of credits earned during the year following high school graduation at an Indiana public college. SOURCE: CHE

Not Applicable/Suppressed Data: Data may be missing either because no data were available or fewer than 10 students were in a group and the data had to be suppressed for privacy reasons. In some cases, at least two groups of student data had to be suppressed because of complementary suppression rules.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education builds a policy agenda on a commitment to using compelling data to increase transparency, inform practice and drive change for the benefit of all Hoosiers. By publishing a series of **consumer-friendly reports**, the Commission spotlights progress at each stage of the postsecondary pipeline.



The **College Readiness Report** helps schools and communities understand how students are performing in college, while informing state and local policies that increase college readiness, access and success.

**Reaching Higher in a State of Change** is the Commission's fourth strategic plan. It is the guiding document for Indiana to reach the goal of at least 60 percent of Hoosiers with education and training beyond high school by 2025. With the priorities of completion, equity and talent, its "Blueprint for Change" outlines action steps to achieve Indiana's attainment goal.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The **College Completion Report** provides a clearer and more comprehensive picture of college completion in order to advance Indiana's collective efforts to boost educational attainment.

The **College Equity Report** disaggregates demographic data from the Commission's College Readiness and Completion reports to highlight outcomes in Indiana for race and ethnicity, gender, geography and socioeconomic status. The report also tracks the state's progress in closing the educational achievement gaps in Indiana.

The **College Value Report** provides a clearer picture of the returns a college degree yields after graduation and beyond, both to the individual and the state. These benefits include greater earnings, job security, enhanced social mobility, increased civic engagement, improved health and wellness, a higher quality of life and more.



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# INDIANA COMMISSION *for* HIGHER EDUCATION

## MISSION

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education is a 14-member public body created in 1971 to define the missions of Indiana's colleges and universities, plan and coordinate the state's postsecondary education system, administer state financial aid, and ensure that Indiana's higher education system is aligned to meet the needs of students and the state.



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