



INDIANA COMMISSION for
HIGHER EDUCATION



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K-12, Higher Ed and Workforce Leaders Make a Commitment to ‘Not Leave Hoosiers Behind’ During First State of Education and Workforce Address *Indiana’s education and workforce agencies discuss current, future talent pipeline needs*

(INDIANAPOLIS) – Alignment and collaboration among Indiana’s education and workforce agencies was the key message of the [“State of Education and the Workforce”](#) program, which aired March 11 on WFYI and other IPBS stations around the state. Together, Indiana Secretary of Education Dr. Katie Jenner, Commissioner for Higher Education Teresa Lubbers and Department of Workforce Development Commissioner Fred Payne sat down for an in-depth discussion about Indiana’s education- and workforce-related issues for 2021 and beyond.

Helping Hoosier students find the “right fit” for their individual lives, preparing them to graduate high school and go on to postsecondary education or to a high-quality workforce opportunity and engaging with the many resources Indiana provides for workforce development were themes of the first-ever State of Education and the Workforce address.

Watch the full address [here](#).

Dr. Jenner, Lubbers and Payne also came together again yesterday on WFYI’s daily [All IN](#) radio program for an expanded discussion. It can be downloaded [here](#) or on other podcast services.

Commissioner Lubbers annually addresses a crowd about the State of Higher Education—this would have been the ninth year for such an address in front of an audience of education, government, business and community leaders. Due to the safety and health concerns around COVID-19, the 2021 address was pre-recorded at the WFYI studios.

A continued focus on alignment through the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet provided additional motivation for a new format, by expanding the focus to be a larger discussion about the state’s talent pipeline. The discussion included an introduction and conclusion message from Governor Eric J. Holcomb, encouraging Hoosiers to take advantage of the resources available in Indiana, including the [21st Century Scholarship](#) and the [Next Level Jobs](#) program.

“We are focusing on the future: the future of learning, the future of work and the future of Indiana,” said Commissioner Lubbers, who also serves as Chair of the Governor’s Workforce Cabinet and moderated the address. “This discussion, which will be ongoing, helps us lay the foundation for our collective agencies to work together to meet the state’s current needs, while also preparing for the future.”

‘Right fit’ for Hoosier students imperative to K-12 preparation

Dr. Jenner was appointed as the state’s first Secretary of Education by Governor Holcomb in early 2021. Her remarks in the address include the need for expanded early learning, early college credit and career exploration opportunities, which lead to helping students find the “right fit” for their individual lives and lifelong learning.

“We’re really looking at blurring the lines between K-12, higher ed and workforce and making sure all of our students have access to the right fit, considering the accelerating change that’s happening around us,” Jenner said.

Celebrating local leadership and best practices is important for the Department of Education, she added.

“We have some really good work happening in some of our Indiana communities, where they are partnering hand-in-hand with their early learning to grade 12 system, their higher ed, their workforce, whether it’s through work-based learning or further training,” Jenner said. “How do we celebrate the great work happening in Indiana and point to some of our models as best practices for others to learn and engage with? Our local leaders are really the people who are getting it done for their communities.”



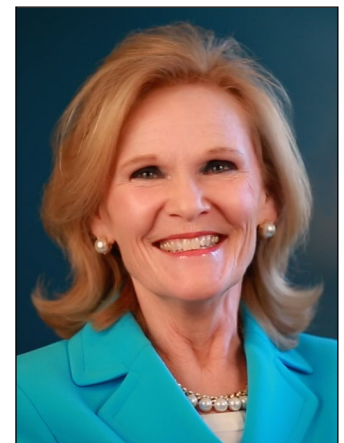
Dr. Katie Jenner

Increasing educational attainment to grow Hoosier income

Lubbers has served as the state’s Higher Education Commissioner since 2009. She encouraged greater collaboration toward the state’s educational attainment goal of having at least 60 percent of Hoosiers with a quality credential beyond high school by 2025. One of the Commission’s goals in its strategic plan for higher education is to raise the median household income for Hoosiers over the next 10 years.

“This is tough. It is hard to move income levels for Hoosiers. And we can’t do it individually. I think one of the best things about us being together for this discussion is that we each have a part to play in improving the lives of the individual—improving their incomes, improving their personal prosperity and the opportunity to live a meaningful life,” Lubbers said.

“We know that those with more education are less likely to have job disruptions and less likely to be impacted by the volatility of the market. We have an obligation to make sure we are not leaving people behind, so they do have those opportunities. For those individuals who haven’t been able to fully participate in the economy, we have an obligation to them to make sure that they can. Let’s make a commitment together with our agencies and with the employer community that we will not leave Hoosiers behind.”



Teresa Lubbers

Engaging Hoosiers in the workforce of today and preparing them for tomorrow

While the need for education and training hasn’t changed, the urgency behind that need has accelerated, said Indiana Department of Workforce Development Commissioner Fred Payne. Payne was appointed head of DWD in 2017.

“One of the things COVID-19 has taught us is that there’s a greater appetite for people who can solve problems, who can think critically, who can quickly adapt. Those things were happening before. But COVID-19 helped to accelerate the pace of that and the need for that,” he said. “And individuals are understanding a little bit better now that the more education and training they have, the more flexibility and more opportunity they have.”

Engagement, evolution and development are three key words Payne uses to describe DWD’s focus on meeting current job needs and being prepared for the future economy.

“It’s incumbent upon us to ensure that we have a workforce that’s continuing to evolve and that is getting the right amount of education at the right time and that we’re providing the community with labor information on what type of jobs will be available in the future, and what employer demands are to fill those jobs in the future,” he said. “All of that goes back to education and training.”



Fred Payne

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About the Indiana Commission for Higher Education

Created in 1971, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education plans, coordinates and defines Indiana's postsecondary education system to align higher learning with the needs of students and the state. The Commission also administers Indiana's financial aid programs, including the early college promise scholarship, which celebrated 30 years in 2020. Learn more about the Commission's *Reaching Higher in a State of Change* strategic plan at www.in.gov/che.

About the Indiana Department of Education

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) oversees Indiana primary and secondary schools across Indiana. IDOE is dedicated to providing quality, purposeful educational opportunities for all students to prepare them for lifelong success. For more information, visit doe.in.gov.

About the Indiana Department of Workforce Development

[DWD](#) serves the worker and the employer to ensure workplace success. DWD is committed to innovating and invigorating Indiana's economic future by providing WorkOne Career Centers, Unemployment Insurance, Labor Market Information, Regional Workforce Strategies and Professional Training. Through these services, DWD is able to develop a premier workforce that enables Indiana employers to flourish and entices businesses from outside our state to relocate to Indiana.