

Indiana Students Making the Most of Summer 2021

Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education

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As Indiana students have wrapped up the school year and are now into summer, parents, schools and community partners are already thinking about ways to help children and teens prepare for the grade level ahead. With two school years now impacted by COVID-19, we, as partners in K-12 and higher education, have been challenged to work together to accelerate student learning and ensure all students have a pathway to success.

Indiana's recent high school graduates are focusing on their immediate next steps, and in a year unlike any other, the State of Indiana is doubling down on its commitment to help them succeed. New partnerships will provide several summer learning opportunities for high school students and recent graduates:

- The "Crossing the Finish Line" initiative will allow students to earn postsecondary credentials this summer through a partnership with Ivy Tech Community College and Vincennes University.
- The "Bridging the Gap" initiative will allow students to enroll and earn college credit at Ivy Tech and receive financial incentives through a new statewide summer bridge program, aimed at helping students meet math and English/Language Arts benchmarks.

These summer opportunities aren't just for students heading to a college campus in the fall. Thousands of Hoosier high school students on career and technical pathways are very close to earning postsecondary credentials, including industry certifications. The state is funding opportunities for these students, too, so that they can earn a valuable credential this summer that prepares them to enter the workforce directly or continue in an apprenticeship or career pathway.

Indiana's big goal is that at least 60% of Hoosiers have quality education or training beyond high school by 2025. At just over 48%, we must expand educational opportunities to ensure college and workforce readiness.

Crossing the Finish Line

Nearly two-thirds of Indiana's students graduate with dual credit (taught by a high school teacher), dual enrollment (taught by a college instructor) or Advanced Placement (college-level credit earned by passing rigorous subject-matter assessments). These students work hard during the school year, earning college-level credit in high school.

Many of these students are very close to earning a credential or a year's worth of college through the Indiana College Core. The Indiana College Core is a 30-credit-hour block of general education college-level coursework that is required to transfer to Indiana's public universities, and is also accepted by many private universities. When high school students earn the Indiana College Core through dual credit, they save thousands of dollars in tuition costs — spending \$750 or less compared to \$4,200 to \$10,500 at a two- or four-year college.

Bridging the Gap

We also know students need help getting back on track to feel better prepared for their next step after graduation — whether that's college, an apprenticeship, or workforce training. The state has created a statewide summer bridge program and is providing students free access to virtual coursework through Ivy Tech combined with one-on-one support with an Ivy Tech instructor. Students who participate and successfully complete the coursework will be ready for college in the fall and can earn a scholarship of up to \$300 along the way.

Indiana is working to blur the lines between PreK-12, higher education and workforce, creating an education-to-workforce continuum that will ensure Hoosiers are on the best trajectory for their individual lives, while meeting the evolving needs for our state's economy.

The learning disruption caused by COVID-19 made a measurable impact on Indiana families over the past year. These summer initiatives are just a few examples of innovative and community-based partnerships that can make a big difference for Hoosier students and families. The Indiana Department of Education and Indiana Commission for Higher Education stand together and are committed to these important initiatives and most importantly, the students they will serve.

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