



INDIANA DEPARTMENT of EDUCATION

Mike Braun, Governor
Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

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Indiana is Leading the Way in Preparing Students for Life After Graduation *New 50-State Study Highlights Indiana's Progress in Modernizing High School*

(INDIANAPOLIS) - A [new, nationwide study of high school policies](#) in all 50 states finds that Indiana is leading the way in preparing students for life after graduation. The study, released Wednesday by the XQ Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, specifically focuses on rethinking high school, ensuring it maximizes the impact for students.

The Future Is High School: A Strategy for State Leaders to Accelerate Learning, Work, and American Renewal identifies 10 policy actions to make high school more rigorous, engaging, and career connected. With six of these policy actions in place and another underway, Indiana is a national model in preparing students for the future.

"Indiana continues to be a leader in rethinking high school with a learner-centered approach that empowers each student to pursue the pathway that best fits their unique talents, interests, and goals," said Governor Mike Braun. "By making education more relevant and providing direct connections to their future, we are driving better outcomes, both for individual students, as well as our state."

Indiana has been leading the way in rethinking the traditional high school model, as highlighted in the XQ Institute report, which specifically recognizes the state's leadership in creating seamless pathways from high school to what's next, as well as recognizing credit for real-world learning, such as earning a credential of value or participating in work-based learning experiences. Both policies are central to Indiana's new diploma requirements, which allow students to earn readiness seals whether they plan to go straight into a career, continue their education, or serve in the military.

In addition to recognizing academic mastery, these readiness seals are intentionally designed to connect learning to students' unique future goals. Students who graduate with the state's new Enrollment Honors Plus Seal also receive automatic acceptance to all seven of Indiana's public colleges and universities.

"In Indiana, we are all hands on deck when it comes to increasing opportunities for students, and our strong momentum is a direct result of the alignment between K-12, higher education, and business and industry," said Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education. "While good public policy can help provide a foundation, we know that the real work happens locally, in classrooms and communities across Indiana. Our state's recognition in this report is a celebration of that work and further challenges us to build on this momentum, think boldly, and keep evolving for Hoosier students."

The report, which will be released every two years, underscores the need for strong implementation to ensure that educators, schools, and communities have the support needed to turn innovative policy into real impact.

"States have more opportunity, responsibility and authority over public education than at any time in recent memory, and Indiana is showing the entire country what's possible when leaders focus on high school," said Russlynn Ali, CEO of XQ Institute and Managing Director of the Education Fund at Emerson Collective. "With 378,000 job openings to fill each year, Indiana isn't waiting around to unlock new opportunities for students—because they've realized that high school is the future of everything."

This spring, XQ will embark on the first leg of its *Future Is High School* bus tour, a national effort designed to elevate the voices of those closest to the work of transforming high school. The tour will kick off in Indianapolis at the Indiana Statehouse, marking the first stop in a multi-phase effort to activate local expertise and showcase what is possible when communities lead.

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