



Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update

Weekly Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education

August 21, 2026

A Message from Dr. Katie Jenner

Over the past week and a half, we've been in contact with multiple superintendents and leaders across the state who continue to recover from last week's destructive storms. While many schools have safely reopened, some communities in Northwest Indiana remain without electricity. Let's continue to support these schools as they work tirelessly to get students back in the classroom.

If you read last week's message, you've heard the great news: for the **fifth consecutive year**, *more and more Hoosiers are reading by the end of third grade*.

Behind our continued statewide gains are the individual schools and educators who believe that every child is capable of becoming a confident reader. In 2026, **40% of** Indiana elementary schools – **511 total schools** – hit our state's 95% reading goal...**more than double the number from 2023**. Today, I'd like to highlight two of the *many* schools achieving incredible results for students.

Parkside Elementary School, Bartholomew Consolidated School Corporation

Statewide, literacy rates for students receiving special education services increased for a fifth consecutive year and have increased by 14.5 percentage points since 2021. Community and local school leadership is making this happen, including schools like Parkside Elementary School in Columbus.

At last week's State Board of Education (SBOE) meeting, we were joined by Superintendent **Dr. Chad Phillips**, Principal **Chris Smith**, Director of Elementary Education **Dr. Laura Hack**, Director of Special Education **Jessica Vogel**, Special Education Teacher **Lars McCain**, and Instructional Coach **Ashley Kreutzjans**.

Parkside has been part of the Indiana Literacy Cadre for the past two years, and in 2026, they surpassed the statewide reading goal with more than 96% of their students passing IREAD. This includes a **100% pass rate for students receiving special education services**.

Principal Smith emphasized how their general and special education teachers work together, ensuring students receiving special education services are an integral part of their literacy focus. He shared the story of one third grader in particular who did not pass IREAD on her first attempt in second grade, and through data-informed, targeted support, she successfully passed at the end of third grade. Now, she enjoys visiting the kindergarten classroom to read to the younger students and recently shared, "It just feels good to be able to read."

Principal Smith said it well: "It's not about a score...it's about having successful readers and lifelong learners in the future."

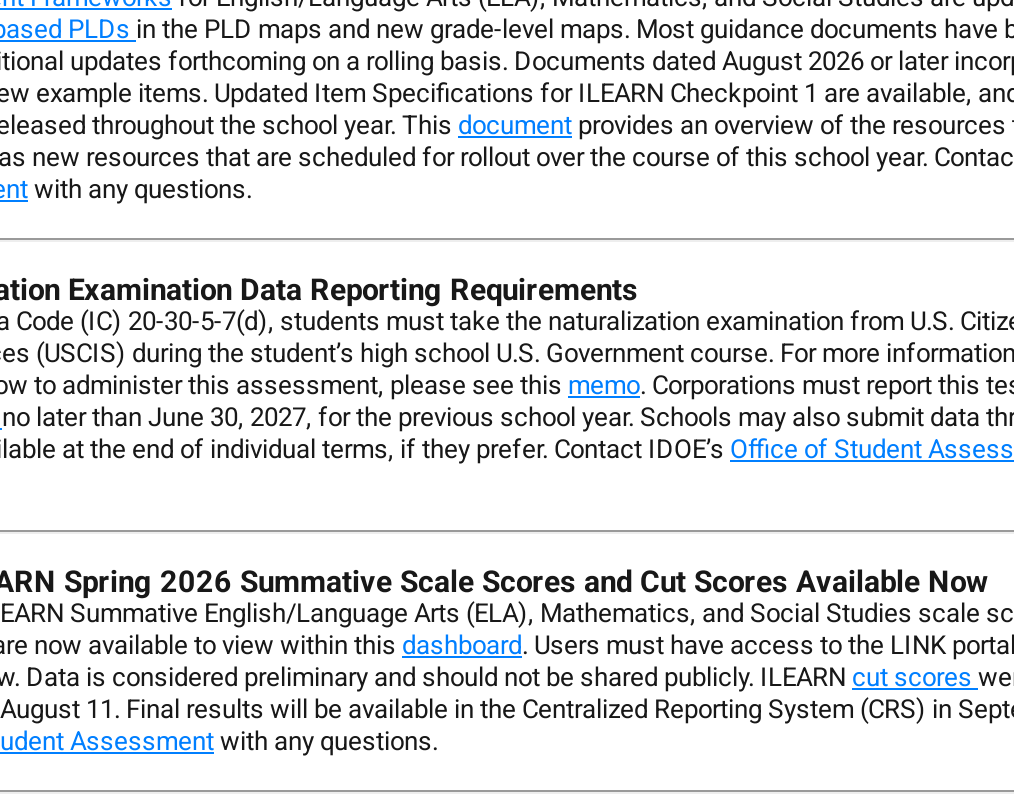
St. Anthony Catholic School, Indianapolis

We were also joined by Superintendent **Dr. Brian Disney**, Director **Madalyn Schepers**, and Assistant Principal **Johnathan Grismore** from St. Anthony Catholic School in downtown Indianapolis.

St. Anthony serves a 99% Hispanic student population. After their 2025 IREAD scores showed 54.2% of their students were reading proficiently, they set a goal of reaching 100% in 2026. They wrote that goal on a whiteboard and worked toward it every day. While participating in the Literacy Cadre, all of their third and fourth grade teachers, along with the literacy coach and principal, also completed science of reading training through Keys to Literacy. By strengthening their instructional practices and maintaining high expectations for every student, they **reached their 100% goal**.

Principal Schepers described what it was like to call students down to the office and tell them *they did it!* There were cheers, tears of joy, and even a few requests to call their mom to share the good news. She captured this achievement perfectly, stating, "Our students didn't suddenly become capable when they reached third grade, they were always capable of this. What changed is the strength, consistency, and precision of our literacy systems surrounding them."

Check out a short video below to hear directly from these schools:



These are incredible success stories, and there are so many others across Indiana. I've loved seeing all of the local IREAD celebrations over the past week. Many of you have strategically shared your news with your community via social media, special bulletins to parents, or through local news stories. Let's keep it going!

As always, thank you for all that you do for our Hoosier students, and stay safe!

Important Announcements

NEW: Indiana Secures the Nation's Second Workforce Pell Grant Program

The U.S. Department of Education approved the nation's second Workforce Pell Grant program in Indiana. Eligible students at Ivy Tech Community College can now use federal Pell Grant dollars to enroll in its Clinical Medical Assistant program, an eight-week program that prepares students for careers in key healthcare professions. Learn more about this opportunity [here](#).

Legislative Guidance

REMINDER: 2026 Legislative Guidance

Following the close of each legislative session, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) immediately begins working to implement newly enacted legislation impacting K-12 education, which includes compiling [guidance for schools and educators](#). This guidance is a product of robust cross-agency collaboration and partnership with countless stakeholders. This is an iterative document that will continue to be updated and improved in collaboration with educators.

Office of Assessment

NEW: Updated Indiana Assessment Frameworks with Evidence-Based Performance Level Descriptors (PLDs) Now Available

[Indiana Assessment Frameworks](#) for English/Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Social Studies are updated with the new ILEARN [evidence-based PLDs](#) in the PLD maps and new grade-level maps. Most guidance documents have been updated and released, with additional updates forthcoming on a rolling basis. Documents dated August 2026 or later incorporate evidence-based PLDs and new example items. Updated Item Specifications for ILEARN Checkpoint 1 are available, and remaining resources will be released throughout the school year. This [document](#) provides an overview of the resources that have been refreshed, as well as new resources that are scheduled for rollout over the course of this school year. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

NEW: Naturalization Examination Data Reporting Requirements

Pursuant to Indiana Code (IC) 20-30-5-7(d), students must take the naturalization examination from U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) during the student's high school U.S. Government course. For more information on this requirement and how to administer this assessment, please see this [memo](#). Corporations must report this testing data to IDOE using this [JoTform](#) no later than June 30, 2027, for the previous school year. Schools may also submit data through the [JoTform](#) as they become available at the end of individual terms, if they prefer. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: ILEARN Spring 2026 Summative Scale Scores and Cut Scores Available Now

The spring 2026 ILEARN Summative English/Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Social Studies scale scores and proficiency levels are now available to view within this [dashboard](#). Users must have access to the LINK portal and EdData permissions to view. Data is considered preliminary and should not be shared publicly. ILEARN [cut scores](#) were approved by SBOE on Tuesday, August 11. Final results will be available in the Centralized Reporting System (CRS) in September. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: ILEARN Checkpoint Data and Reporting Updates for 2026-2027 School Year

IDOE and Cambium Assessments, Inc. continue to prioritize educator and family feedback to inform ongoing improvements to the ILEARN Through Year Assessment system. Reporting enhancements include a new ILEARN Checkpoint Individual Student Report (ISR), the new Teacher Reporting System (TRS) which includes dynamic reports, and updates to the Centralized Reporting System (CRS) and student data file. TRS is designed for Test Administrators (TAs) to view classroom (roster) and individual student data for the ILEARN Checkpoints. TRS modules can be viewed [here](#). New data and reports will be available for ILEARN Checkpoint 1. Resources to support these updates will be available soon, including a brochure, user guide, video series, and report addendums. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Mathematics Standard Spotlights Videos and Resources

IDOE is pleased to announce the release of the first two mathematics Standard Spotlight videos and resources, part of a larger collection of 432 videos, 216 for math and 216 for ELA, that support educators and families of students in grades three through eight. Each standard will include two resource sets: one for educators highlighting key content and strategies, and one for parents and families offering an overview and simple at-home activities. Additional videos and resources for both content areas will be released throughout the 2026-2027 school year and into summer 2027, providing ongoing support for student learning across Indiana. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

- Grade Three Mathematics 3.CA.1
 - Educator: [Video | Resource](#)
 - Parent & Family: [Video | Resource](#)
- Grade Eight Mathematics 8.NS.4
 - Educator: [Video | Resource](#)
 - Parent & Family: [Video | Resource](#)

REMINDER: I AM U.S. Government ECA Content and Fairness Committee

IDOE is seeking Educators to apply for the I AM U.S. Government ECA Content and Fairness Committee to review items for this new assessment aligned with the Indiana Content Standards. This committee will meet virtually from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET on Tuesday, September 15. Participants will receive a \$160 honorarium for their time. Submit this [JoTform](#) to indicate interest by Friday, August 28. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Recruitment for ISPROUT Webinar Panelists

IDOE is seeking Corporation Test Coordinators (CTCs), Data Managers (DMs), and Trainers of Teachers (ToTs) who have demonstrated strong implementation success with the ISPROUT assessment to feature on a future webinar and panel discussion to share effective strategies, practices, and insights with other schools. Please complete this [JoTform](#) to indicate initial interest in participating, as well as data around possible topics to explore, such as:

- Observation tips (e.g., time, use of observation guides)
- Use of resources (e.g., lessons)
- IEP goals
- Sharing data with families (e.g., ISR, conferences)
- Using the data in the classroom (e.g., curriculum, grouping)

Selected panelists will be notified between Monday, August 31 and Friday, September 4. The webinar is expected to take place near the end of September or beginning of October, depending on panelist availability. Please respond by Friday, August 28, to be considered. Contact IDOE's [Office of Assessment](#) with any questions.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

NEW: Guidance on College Board AP Career Kickstart Courses

This [memo](#) provides guidance on courses available to Indiana schools through College Board's new initiative, AP Career Kickstart. The memo covers available courses, how they align with existing CTE courses, and provides reporting guidance. Contact CTE@che.in.gov with any questions.

NEW: Indiana CTE Team Professional Development Sessions

The Commission for Higher Education will provide sessions from 1 to 4 p.m. ET on Thursday, September 10, at the Indiana Association for Career and Technical Education (IACTE) pre-conference. Topics will include work-based learning, credentials of value, and the CTE Data Explorer. Registration for these pre-conference sessions is separate from the full conference. Find more information about the conference on the [Indiana ACTE website](#), and register for the pre-conference sessions [here](#). Contact Indiana ACTE at director@indianacte.org with questions regarding registration.

REMINDER: Upcoming Industry Certification Reimbursement Process

Details on the upcoming industry certification reimbursement process overseen by the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's Career and Technical Education team can be [found here](#). School corporations, charter schools, and accredited nonpublic schools are eligible to receive reimbursement for data submitted through Tuesday, September 1. Schools should ensure any remaining certification data for passed or failed exams is reported by the deadline. Please contact CTE@che.in.gov with any questions.

Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Digital Learning, and Kindergarten Readiness

NEW: September is School Fitness Month

September marks School Fitness Month in Indiana, part of Governor Mike Braun's Make Indiana Healthy Again initiative. Regular physical activity supports students' overall health, boosts confidence, and improves focus. Walking, exploring a new park, or biking one of Indiana's many trails are simple ways to increase movement and discover all the unique parts of our state. Over the next few weeks, we'll share resources designed to help Hoosier students strengthen their health and well-being, including the newly developed Governor's Fitness Test! Jumpstart your School Fitness Month celebrations with these [fun ideas](#) to promote physical activity and health awareness among students.

NEW: 2026-2027 K-12 Robotics Competition Grant Recipients Announcement

IDOE is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2026-2027 K-12 Robotics Competition Grant. This competitive grant supports schools and other eligible entities in providing opportunities to increase interest and improve STEM skills through participation in competitive robotics programs. Review this [memo](#) for a list of the winners. All 2026-2027 K-12 Robotics Competition Grant recipients should mark their calendar for Wednesday, August 26, for the required virtual [kick-off meeting](#) from 1 to 2 p.m. ET. The meeting will support recipients in managing the grant and will be recorded for those unable to attend. Contact IDOE's [Curriculum and Instruction Learning Grants](#) with any questions.

NEW: Indiana's Tiered System of Supports for Kindergarten to Grade Eight Mathematics - Updated Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Corporations and non-public schools can refer to the [Tiered System of Supports for Mathematics \(K-8\) FAQ](#) for commonly asked questions about Indiana's Tiered System of Supports for kindergarten to grade eight mathematics and related questions regarding new legislated mathematics updates. The FAQ will continue to be updated as new information becomes available. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

NEW: Accelerating Middle School Students in Mathematics

IDOE will welcome expert educator Ella Herreth on Wednesday, August 26, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. ET for a live webinar focused on effective strategies for accelerating middle school students in mathematics. This session will support both experienced teachers of advanced middle school mathematics courses and those new to teaching these courses. [Register here](#) through the Indiana Learning Lab. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

NEW: Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Computer Science (CS) Professional Development Session: "How is Computer Science Changing with Artificial Intelligence?"

On Wednesday, September 2, at 3 p.m. ET, IDOE will host an expert panel in the Indiana Learning Lab to discuss how CS is changing with AI. With the rising use of AI, teachers, parents, and schools are asking what CS will become. An expert panel featuring faculty from Purdue University's CS department and Indiana-based business technology leaders will discuss what is changing and what is staying the same in CS and offer insight about what skills students should be learning in K-12 CS. You can sign up for the session [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Mathematics Tiered System of Supports Live Series - Updated Office Hours and Parking Lot Now Available

Educators and administrators interested in responses to questions received during the recent Mathematics Tiered System of Supports Live Series: Starting the Year Off Strong with Data Webinars may now access the [parking lot](#) for both sessions. The kindergarten to grade two session (held on Monday, July 27) [recording](#) and [presentation](#) are available, and grades three to eight session (held on Tuesday, July 28) [recording](#) and [presentation](#) are available. Additionally, the [2026-2027 K-8 Tiered Instruction Support Office Hours](#) has been updated. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: High Ability Office Hours - Host a Decision for High Ability Learners

IDOE's Office of Curriculum and Instruction will data a special High Ability Office Hour Session to support local implementation of mathematics tiered instruction, focusing on developing data-decision rules using a new three-guidepost data-triangulation framework with locally determined supplemental factors. The session will take place on Thursday, August 25, from 3:30 to 4 p.m. ET. Use [this link](#) to join the session. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#). [High Ability](#) with any questions.

Office of School Finance

REMINDER: Common School Loans

IDOE's Office of School Finance will accept applications for construction and technology common school loans from corporations, charter schools, and school corporation career and technical education schools through Friday, October 16. Petitions must be submitted to IDOE by this date to be considered. The application and other details can be found in the [Public School Finance Community in Moodle](#) under Common School Funds, then under Spring. Contact IDOE's [Office of School Finance](#) with any questions.

Office of Special Education, English Learning, and Migrant Education

NEW: WIDA-Facilitated Professional Development (PD) Opportunities

IDOE will facilitate two in-person PD sessions this fall, open to Indiana educators of English learners (ELs) free of charge.

- *Writing with MLs in the Secondary Grades* is a two-day workshop on Tuesday, September 29, and Wednesday, September 30, at MSD Lawrence Township in Indianapolis. Registration and a description of the session can be found [here](#).
- *Teacher Leaders: Planning with the ELD Standards Framework* is a one-day session on Thursday, October 1, at MSD Lawrence Township with a virtual component occurring the week prior on Thursday, September 24, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. ET. Registration and additional information can be found [here](#).

WIDA will also facilitate an asynchronous, virtual opportunity titled, *Considerations When Educating Bilingual Learners with Identified Learning Disabilities*. This 13-week course culminates with a virtual workshop on Tuesday, November 24, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. ET. Register and registration information can be found [here](#).

The deadline to register for each opportunity is Friday, September 4. Space is limited, and districts may register up to two participants per session. Contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Multilingual Education](#) with any questions.

NEW: Proportionate Share Requirements

On August 3, 2026, the U.S. Department of Education issued the following [letter](#), addressing local education agency (LEA) requirements for parentally placed private school children with disabilities. Choice scholarship students with disabilities, including students receiving special education services through a CSEP, must be considered by the LEA when determining how it will expend its IDEA proportionate share. Through the timely and meaningful consultation process, the LEA consults with representatives of participating non-public schools and parents regarding key issues relating to the equitable participation of eligible students, as outlined in 34 C.F.R. § 300.134. A school corporation within whose boundaries the Choice school is located may choose, but is not required, to expend part of the proportionate share of federal special education funds on services to Choice scholarship students (511 IAC 7-49-10 (b)).

IDOE will provide additional guidance to practitioners as it relates to the letter and IDEA requirements in the near future. Additionally, IDOE's Office of Special Education will host a series of regional convenings beginning in September, which will include topics such as proportionate share. For more information on these convenings, please click [here](#). Directors may also find training slides related to proportionate share in Moodle (Office of Special Education Community -> Fiscal -> Part B -> Presentations) or participate in any of our regularly scheduled office hours for support.

NEW: IDEA Equitable Services Consultation Due Tuesday, September 15

Evidence of initial consultation for IDEA Proportionate Share equitable services with all non-public schools located within your district boundaries is due by Tuesday, September 15. As a reminder, the submission should include evidence of the consultation with non-public schools that is required to prepare for the 2026-2027 school year. IDOE provided an Initial Affirmation of Consultation template for IDEA services, which is available in Moodle. If