



Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update

Weekly Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education

October 9, 2026

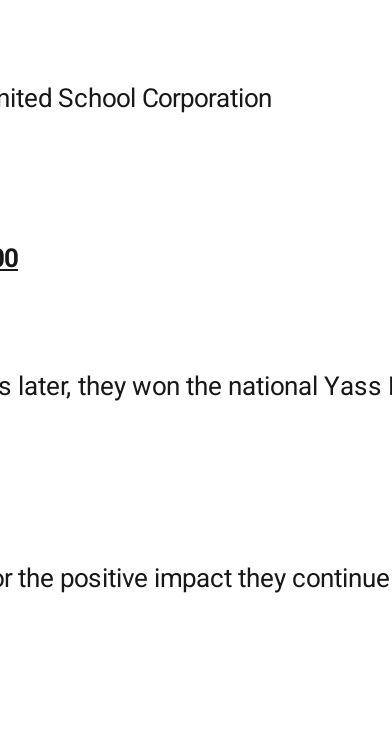
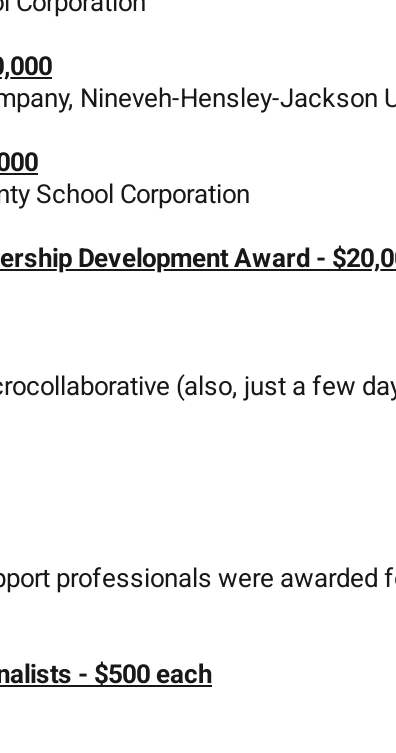
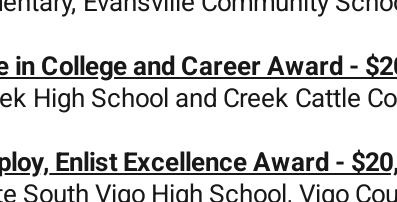
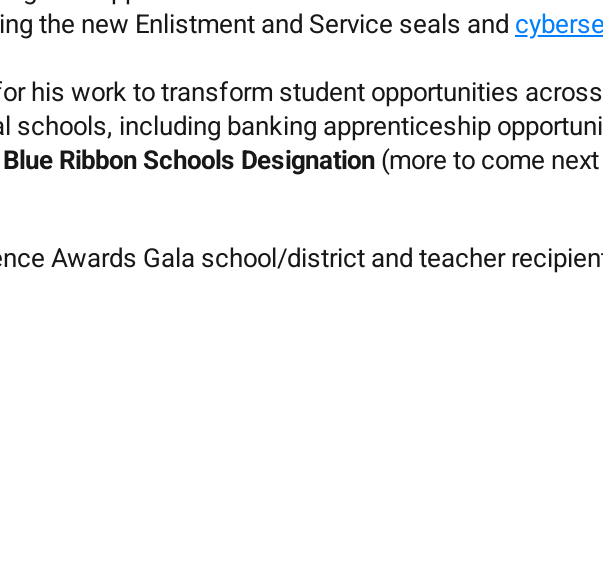
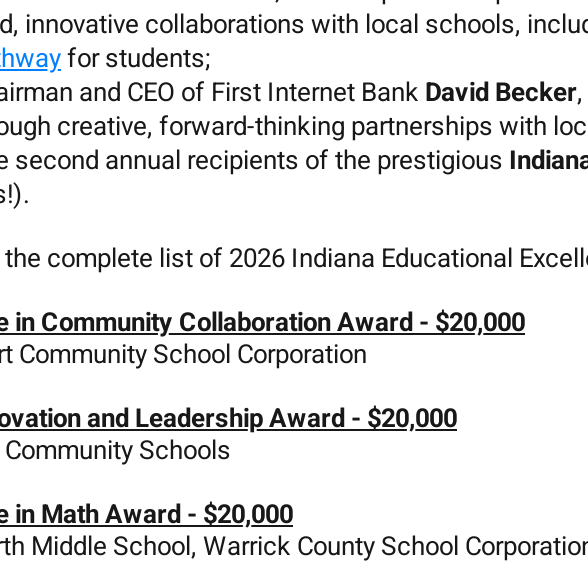
A Message from Dr. Katie Jenner

There is nothing better than rolling out the red carpet for educators and schools across Indiana...while the room was at max capacity at almost 600 people, we have *thousands* of educators and partners across Indiana who are doing great work. What Indiana has accomplished is directly due to working together for a common mission.

One of the most meaningful nights of the year is the annual Educational Excellence Awards gala. This is a moment to celebrate our schools and the educators whose passion and dedication shape students' lives every single day.

Each year, hundreds of guests attend the gala, from teachers, principals, and superintendents...to State Board of Education members and elected officials. So many people with so many unique roles...and the one thing that unites all of us is an unwavering commitment to making education better for the students we serve.

This year, we awarded more than \$210,000 to schools and educators across the state, celebrating their powerful work and supporting them as they continue to grow their impact on students. The awards recognized schools that are excelling in key areas such as literacy (science of reading), STEM, high school innovation, community collaboration, and educator professional development.



The event also recognized dedicated educators, support professionals, and other key partners whose work is expanding opportunities for students statewide, including:

- Indiana's recent Milken Educator Award recipient – **Kayleigh Fosnow**, principal at New Palestine Elementary;
- The **Indiana National Guard**, for their partnership in creating new opportunities for students across the state through bold, innovative collaborations with local schools, including the new Enlistment and Service seals and [cybersecurity pathway](#) for students;
- Chairman and CEO of First Internet Bank **David Becker**, for his work to transform student opportunities across the state through exciting, forward-thinking partnerships with local schools, including banking apprenticeship opportunities; and
- The second annual recipients of the prestigious **Indiana Blue Ribbon Schools Designation** (more to come next week on this!).

Check out the complete list of 2026 Indiana Educational Excellence Awards Gala school/district and teacher recipients below!

Excellence in Community Collaboration Award - \$20,000
Logansport Community School Corporation

Digital Innovation and Leadership Award - \$20,000
Richmond Community Schools

Excellence in Math Award - \$20,000
Castle North Middle School, Warrick County School Corporation

Excellence in STEM Award - \$20,000
William Penn Middle School, Indianapolis Public Schools

Excellence in Literacy Award - \$20,000
Caze Elementary, Evansville Community School Corporation

Excellence in College and Career Award - \$20,000
Indian Creek High School and Creek Cattle Company, Nineveh-Hensley-Jackson United School Corporation

Enroll, Employ, Enlist Excellence Award - \$20,000
Terre Haute South Vigo High School, Vigo County School Corporation

Excellence in Professional Learning and Leadership Development Award - \$20,000
Wa-Nea Community Schools

Excellence in Innovation Award - \$20,000
Eastern Hancock Community Schools and Microcollaborative (also, just a few days later, they won the national Yass Prize for sustainable education, as well as \$500,000!)

Operational Excellence Award - \$20,000
New Albany Floyd County Schools

Additionally, 19 outstanding educators and support professionals were awarded for the positive impact they continue to make for Indiana students.

2026 and 2027 Indiana Teacher of the Year Finalists - \$500 each

Andrea Bormino, Klondike Elementary School
Martin Briggs, F.W. Citchfield Elementary
Kasey Brubaker, Union County High School
Derek Chastain, Columbus East High School
Megan Cronkrite, West Clay Elementary
Matthew Farrell, Harney Elementary School
Craig Harper, Carmel High School
David Harvey, Huntington North High School
L.A. High, Schmuckler Middle School
Brianna Karazica, Bloomfield High School
Cynthia LoGreco, Lake Hills Elementary School
Amanda Ray, Custer Baker Intermediate
Amelia Shaw, Columbus North High School
Kristina Trusty, Hinkle Creek Elementary
Samantha Willsey, Bremen Elementary/Middle School

2026 and 2027 Indiana Teachers of the Year - \$1,000 each

Megan Johnson, Central Elementary School
Jason Witzigreuter, Homestead High School

Indiana's 2026 RISE Award Honorees - \$500 each
Josh Goodman, School Resource Officer, Linton-Stockton High School
Brenda Sellers, Treasurer, New Palestine Elementary

Congratulations to our 2026 recipients, and keep up the great work!

And as always, thank you for the important work you lead daily for our communities, our state, and most importantly, our students!

Important Announcements

NEW: School Year 2026-2027 Teacher Appreciation Grant (TAG) Intent to Apply

Per Indiana Code 20-43-16, the Teacher Appreciation Grant (TAG) program is established to provide millions of dollars directly to schools and thousands of dollars to Indiana's educators to attract, reward, and retain teachers who significantly impact student outcomes. School corporations and charter schools that intend to apply for TAG for school year 2026-2027 must complete the [Intent to Apply Jotform](#) by Friday, October 23. Additional guidance can be found [here](#). Questions may be directed to TAG@doe.in.gov.

Office of Accountability

NEW: 2026-2027 Policy for Public School Instructional Day Waiver Requests

IDOE's guidance regarding instructional day waivers for schools and corporations can be found [here](#). Corporations must have a plan in place to make up the first five canceled in-person instructional days and must also document this plan in DEX. Review the [Public School Instructional Day Waiver Requests Policy Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) for more information. Contact the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE's) [Office of School Accountability](#) with any questions.

Office of Assessment

REMINDER: Advance Placement (AP) Coordinators Can Verify Student Test Numbers (STNs) in AP Registration and Ordering

Under Indiana's new student-centered accountability model, AP exam and PSAT/NMSQT results are used in [Indiana's state accountability calculations](#). To support accurate reporting for all AP and PSAT/NMSQT assessments, beginning with the current school year, schools must ensure that each student's STN is included during the assessment registration process. This process differs by assessment, so be sure to review both sections of [this updated guidance](#) from College Board, which now includes new guidance on how to include STNs for students who have already registered for AP exams, and how AP coordinators can check that students have provided their STN. AP coordinators can verify that students have provided their STN via MyAP by downloading the Student Roster. From the Students page in AP Registration and Ordering, AP coordinators can download a list of all students by clicking Download Student Roster. See instructions on page 77 of the [AP Coordinator Manual](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of School Accountability](#) with accountability model questions and [College Board](#) with any technical questions.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

NEW: Work-Based Learning Digital Resource Hub Launched

This year, Governor Braun announced a new resource to expand career-connected learning opportunities for Indiana's K-12 students. The new [Work-Based Learning Digital Resource Hub](#) has been launched through a partnership between the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (the Commission), IDOE, and [Ascend Indiana](#). This comprehensive collection of practical tools is designed to help K-12 schools, employers, and regional partners implement high-quality work-based learning aligned with Indiana's new [high school diploma](#). The new diploma requirements allow increased flexibility for students to personalize their journey and earn readiness seals aligned to their unique future goals, whether they plan to go to college, go straight into career, or serve in our nation's military. For more information about work-based learning, visit ascendindiana.com/work-based-learning.

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

NEW: Foundations of Mathematics: Kindergarten-Grade Two Learning Lab Course

The second course in the *Making the Shift: Elevating Mathematics Instruction* professional development series, *Foundations of Mathematics: Kindergarten-Grade Two*, has officially launched in the Indiana Learning Lab. This course builds on the learning theory introduced in *How Students Learn Mathematics* and provides a deep dive into the essential content and developmental progressions that shape mathematics learning in early grades. Educators and leaders will explore how foundational numeracy skills develop over time, examine key concepts within the kindergarten to grade two continuum, and learn how evidence-based practices support young learners' mathematical growth. Sign up for the course on the [Indiana Learning Lab](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

NEW: Math Language Routines for Everyone

A newly recorded webinar, [Math Language Routines for Everyone](#), is now available in the Indiana Learning Lab. This session explores strategies for engaging all learners in mathematical discourse, emphasizing the use of precise mathematical vocabulary and offering approaches that help students reflect on their understanding of both content and terminology. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

NEW: The Top Five Indiana Learning Lab Features Every New Teacher Should Know Video

Start your teaching journey with confidence by exploring the Indiana Learning Lab's most helpful tools and resources. [This quick video](#) highlights five essential features that make finding what you need fast and easy! Contact IDOE's [Digital Learning Team](#) with any questions.

NEW: Student Tech Team Spotlight

Join the Richmond Community Schools' student tech team in the Indiana Learning Lab on Thursday, October 15, from 3 to 3:30 p.m. ET as they discuss the benefits of creating a student tech team. Educators will leave with a blueprint to bring this opportunity to their school community. Register on the Indiana Learning Lab's [live calendar of events](#). Contact IDOE's [Digital Learning Team](#) with questions.

REMINDER: K-12 Mathematics Educators Needed for High-Quality Curricular Materials (HQQM) Review Committees

IDOE's Office of Curriculum and Instruction is recruiting interested K-12 mathematics educators for committees that will review core curricular materials submitted by curriculum providers and aligned with the 2026 Indiana Academic Standards for K-12 Mathematics. Interested educators should complete and submit [this form](#) by 11:45 p.m. ET on Friday, October 16, to be considered for this collaborative opportunity. **Educators who teach high school and AP math courses are especially needed at this time.** IDOE will review all applications and notify selected participants in late October. A live virtual training will be provided for all confirmed educator reviewers. Curricular materials approved during this review cycle will be recommended for inclusion on IDOE's HQQM Advisory List for K-12 STEM for use beginning with the 2027-2028 school year. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Nine Dials of Mathematics Word Problem Complexity Resource

A new framework, the [Nine Dials of Mathematics Word Problem Complexity](#) is now available for mathematics educators and coaches in grades three through eight. This resource provides a framework for thinking about mathematics word problem complexity, identifying nine characteristics that can be adjusted to move a problem along the simple-to-complex continuum. This framework provides a concrete, statewide vocabulary for intentionally designing, diagnosing, and differentiating word problems. Contact IDOE's [Office of Assessment](#) with questions.

REMINDER: Virtual Transition to Kindergarten Summit

Please join us on Wednesday, November 4, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. ET for our annual [Virtual Transition to Kindergarten Summit](#), presented in collaboration with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration's Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning and the Head Start State Collaboration Office. You'll hear from nationally renowned expert Laura Bornfreund and a panel of Hoosier educators who will share insights, strategies, and promising practices to support strong kindergarten transitions across Indiana. Before attending, we invite you to complete IDOE's [Kindergarten Model and Self-Assessment](#) to maximize your experience. Learn more and register to attend [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Assessment](#) with questions or for more information.

Office of Educational Options and Quality

REMINDER: October Office Hours

Join us on Tuesday, October 13, for the first fall session of the monthly office hours. There will be two session timeframes, a morning session at 9 a.m. ET and an afternoon session at 1 p.m. ET, both hosted via Microsoft Teams. The session will cover topics such as the October payment, the appeals process, Period 2 applications, and more! No registration is required to attend office hours, and the link to join can be found in the Non-Public School Community in Moodle.

REMINDER: Choice Schools Contact Form

Please ensure all contact information is up to date in Data Exchange (DEX), as this is where Choice specialists pull contact information for your school. If there is someone in addition to the contacts reported in DEX who you would like to receive all messages, or messages with specific content, you may add them via [this form](#). The form also is posted in the Non-Public School Community in Moodle.

REMINDER: Choice Scholarship Fall Payments

To be eligible to receive a student payment in the second fall payment, every student is required to have Membership and Enrollment data certified by Friday, October 9, and a signed Parent and School Signature form uploaded by Monday, October 19. Any student missed in the first fall payment will be paid in the second fall payment as long as the required data is reported for the student in Data Exchange by Thursday, October 1, (census date) and the Parent and School Signature form is uploaded to the Choice Scholarship Student Application tile by Monday, October 19 deadline.

Upon approval of the Choice Scholarship application, the Parent and School Signature form can be found on the second page of a student's estimated award letter in the Choice Scholarship Student Application tile. The Parent and School Signature form is available as soon as the student's application is submitted and approved. The link to upload the form is available in the student application and will remain open through Monday, October 19.

Payment letters will be published to the Choice school's Google folder with an Excel file breakdown of their payment installments. Any discrepancies must be reported to IDOE's Office of Educational Options and Quality at choice-school@doe.in.gov within two weeks from the date of the letter. Appeals will be reviewed by the Choice team for October payment only. No appeals will be accepted for the September payment and those accounts will be reconciled in the October payment. Further details on the appeal process will be provided closer to the October payment disbursement date.

REMINDER: Summer School Submissions

Summer School data is submitted as part of the course outcomes. To learn more about how to submit these data into Data Exchange, visit IDOE's [Knowledge Hub](#), specifically the link [How to Report Summer School Course Outcomes](#). Please submit an [IDOE help ticket](#) if you have any additional questions.

Office of Technology

REMINDER: October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month - Three Quick Wins

It's Cybersecurity Awareness Month! Here are three resources to utilize:

- KnowBe4 has made a [free Cybersecurity Awareness Month Resource Kit](#) to use with your team for the month in order to raise awareness.
- No-cost cybersecurity assessments are currently available through the [Indiana University and Purdue University Cybertrack program](#). Cybersecurity assessments are required for all public schools and school corporations every three years beginning July 1, 2027 in order to fulfill Indiana Code (IC) 4-13.1-4.8.
- [CrowdStrike Falcon Complete](#) is available for no-cost through April 2027 for all staff workstations and servers for all public schools and school corporations.

Office of Educator Talent and Literacy

NEW: 2026-2027 Science of Reading - Experts Explain Series

Join IDOE and The Reading League Indiana from noon to 1 p.m. ET on Tuesday, October 20, for the live Experts Explain series with Dr. Jamey Peavler and her presentation, "Deep Understanding of Reading Science and Structured Literacy." The phrases "reading science" or "science of reading" should be clear indicators of evidence-based practices grounded in research. However, unless we know how to identify high-quality research and understand the frameworks that guide literacy instruction, we risk aligning our instruction with ineffective practices that have been renamed under this umbrella terminology. In this session, participants will outline the defining principles of reading science, examine key seminal works to guide planning what is taught, and connect research on instructional design to identify how to put this knowledge into practice. All Experts Explain sessions will be recorded and shared in the Indiana Learning Lab. See registration details [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

Office of School Finance

NEW: Membership Conflict Petition Process

Please read [this memo](#) regarding the membership conflict petition process. Friday, November 6, is the deadline for a school corporation or charter school to file a petition. Contact IDOE's [Office of School Finance](#) with any questions.

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 Fall. Contact IDOE's [Office of School Finance](#) with any questions.

Office of Special Education, English Learning, and Migrant Education

NEW: Upcoming Director Foundations Session

Special education directors are invited to attend the next installment of our Director Foundations webinar series, happening on Wednesday, October 14, at 12 to 1 p.m. ET. In this virtual [Microsoft Teams session](#), presenters will cover the 1% assessment participation cap. Participants will have the chance to ask questions. Refer to the [special education director outreach opportunities flyer](#) for more information and reach out to specialassistance@doe.in.gov with any questions.

REMINDER: 2026-2027 Certificate of Multilingual Proficiency Participation Registration Now Open

The Certificate of Multilingual Proficiency (CoMP), Indiana's Seal of Bilingualism, is awarded to high school seniors who demonstrate high levels of proficiency in English and another language. It is a great way to celebrate students' achievement in world languages. School corporations or nonpublic schools intending to participate in Indiana's CoMP must renew their registration annually. Those wanting to participate for the 2026-2027 school year must sign up using [this form](#) by March 31, 2027. For more information, see the [Certificate of Multilingual Proficiency webpage](#). This [data template](#) can be used to track student progress and assist with data reporting at the end of the year. Contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Multilingual Education](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Monthly New EL Program are invited to join IDOE in an ongoing PLC during the 2026-2027 school year.

New directors of EL programs are invited to join IDOE in an ongoing PLC during the 2026-2027 school year. This is a place to network with other stakeholders, access timely program information, and bring questions. The next session will be held on Tuesday, October 20, at 9:30 a.m. ET. The meeting link and information can be found on the [IDOE EL PD Opportunities Calendar](#). Please contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Multilingual Education](#) with questions.

Office of Title Grants and Support

NEW: Learning Lab Technical Assistance (TA) Collection

Recent coffee chat and quarterly meeting recordings are now available through the [Indiana Learning Lab's Federal Programs: Coffee Chats and Quarterly Meetings Collection](#). Please contact Title@doe.in.gov with any questions.

REMINDER: October Coffee Chat

Join IDOE's Title Grants and Support team for the October Coffee Chat at 10 a.m. ET on Thursday, October 29, for an informative session regarding grant closeout processes. The session will be recorded and shared in the Indiana Learning Lab. Please ensure attendees register [here](#) as there will not be a regular meeting link. Contact Title@doe.in.gov with any questions.

News from Our Partners

NEW FROM PURDUE 1: Essay Contest for Fifth Graders

Indiana fifth graders can send their ideas to new heights through the Purdue 1 Indiana Essay Competition. The competition invites students to write about how they could use a favorite school subject, hobby, or skill to help a space mission crew succeed, in connection with Purdue's upcoming all-Boilermaker suborbital research spacecraft. Essays are due on Monday, November 30, and one winner from each county will receive a personalized Purdue 1 mission patch. If mission conditions permit, winners' names will fly aboard Purdue 1. Teachers can show students short video messages from Purdue 1 crew members, and anyone can help spread the word with ready-to-share social media posts and graphics available in the [competition toolkit](#). Learn more and enter on [Purdue 1's webpage](#).

NEW FROM LITTLE PATRIOTS: Civics Bee Registration Coming Soon

As America's 250th anniversary celebrations continue, Little Patriots is gearing up to launch its inaugural Little Patriots Civics Bee. This new competition encourages students in kindergarten through fifth grade to dive deeper into American history and civics while giving them a fun way to showcase what they've learned. Students can also earn funds for future educational opportunities and compete for the chance to travel to our nation's capital. Registration for the Little Patriots Civics Bee opens Thursday, October 15. Learn more and [register here](#).

NEW FROM NCADEM: Accessibility Before Accommodation Webinar Series

Join the National Center on Accessible Digital Educational Materials and Instruction (NCADEM) for a three-part virtual learning series exploring accessibility across the lifecycle of digital educational materials, from the resources educators create and select themselves to the materials and learning technologies schools purchase.

- Session one: Creating Accessible Materials from the Start
- Session two: Embedding Accessibility into Procurement
- Session three: Selecting Resources with Accessibility in Mind

This series emphasizes the importance of considering accessibility before materials reach students rather than after a student encounters a barrier. Attendees will learn strategies and tools to proactively embed accessibility into everyday practice and instruction. They will also explore how individual actions connect to broader accessibility systems. Click [here](#) to learn more and to register.

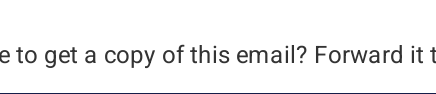
REMINDER FROM ATLAS PROJECT: New Living Library Webpage

Visit the ATLAS Project equipment lending library, a no-cost-service, that loans assistive technology (AT) devices, tools, apps, and resource materials to school personnel at Indiana's local education agencies. Items are loaned for a six-week evaluation period for the purpose of previewing and/or trialing with students. Technical assistance may be requested to accompany equipment loans. Visit the newly updated [Lending Library webpage](#). Contact k12atlas@eastersealscrossroads.org for more information.

REMINDER FROM THE HOOSIER EDUCATIONAL COMPUTER COORDINATORS (HECC): Technology Coordinator of the Year and Annual Conference Information

Nominations for the HECC 2026 Technology Coordinator of the Year Award (TCOY) are now open through Friday, October 23, at 5 p.m. ET. This recognition honors an exceptional K-12 technology leader who demonstrates excellence in advancing learning through effective technology leadership. Eligible nominations must be submitted by a colleague or supervisor using the [2026 TCOY Nomination Form](#).

Additionally, [registration is now open](#) for the 2026 HECC Conference for the 40th anniversary of the organization. The conference will be held in the Crownie Plaza Union Station in downtown Indianapolis from Wednesday, November 11, to Friday, November 13. Register for incredible technology professional development, over 135 exhibitors, and special 40th anniversary events.



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