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Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update

Weekly Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education

October 16, 2026

A Message from Dr. Katie Jenner

It's hard to believe the fall break season is well under way! Whether you're catching up on rest, checking a few things off of your to-do list, or getting away someplace fun, I hope you enjoy (or already have enjoyed!) this well-earned break.

In last week's message, we highlighted some of our exceptional educators and schools honored at the 2026 Educational Excellence Awards Gala. The celebrations continued this week with the announcement of our second cohort of **Indiana Blue Ribbon Schools**, a recognition for schools that perform strongly or significantly improved in the areas that matter most for student success—reading, math, college- and career-readiness, and strong attendance. These schools are setting high expectations and expanding opportunities for all learners.

Indiana's 2026 Blue Ribbon Schools include:

- **Bethany Christian School** – Independent Non-Public Schools
- **Brown Elementary School** – Brownsburg Community School Corporation
- **College Wood Elementary School** – Carmel Clay Schools
- **East Crawford Elementary School** – Crawford County Community School Corporation
- **Evansville Christian School Newburgh** – Independent Non-Public Schools
- **Faith Christian School** – Independent Non-Public Schools
- **Frank H Wheeler Elementary School 4** – School Town of Speedway
- **Fred J Hums Elementary School** – School City of Mishawaka
- **Kingsford Heights Elementary School** – La Porte Community School Corporation
- **Liberty Elementary School** – Union County College Corner Joint School District



- **McKenney-Harrison Elementary School** – DeKalb County Central United School District
- **Memorial Elementary School** – Valparaiso Community Schools
- **Newburgh Elementary School** – Warrick County School Corporation
- **Saint Paul Catholic School** – Diocese of Gary
- **South Bend Hebrew Day School** – Independent Non-Public Schools
- **West Washington Elementary School** – West Washington School Corporation

With more than 2,300 K-12 schools across Indiana, to be named a Blue Ribbon School is an incredible accomplishment. This level of excellence is only possible when strong educators work hand-in-hand with families to meet the unique needs of each learner, and I want to commend these communities for working together to get it done for students.

Thank you, as always, to the many educators, staff, students, and families who make our schools great, and enjoy the fall break!

Important Announcements

NEW: Public Comment Period Open for Amendment to Indiana's State Plan under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is preparing to submit an amendment to its State Plan under the Elementary and Secondary Education (ESEA) to the U.S. Department of Education to reflect flexibilities granted under Indiana's recently approved ESEA Flexibility Waiver for school accountability and school identification. This amendment incorporates Indiana's recently approved state accountability model into our federal system to strengthen alignment across systems to promote Indiana's vision for Hoosier Graduates Prepared to Succeed. As required, IDOE is seeking public comment on the waiver request. Comments will be accepted through [Jotform](#) until Friday, November 6.

REMINDER: 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

REMINDER: 2026 Cohort Mandatory and Voluntary Graduation Rate Audit Closing Soon

The voluntary and mandatory graduation rate audit will close on Monday, October 26. Schools subject to the mandatory 2026 cohort graduation rate audit as a part of the normal review cycle have been notified by email. If you did not receive an email or are unsure if your school was selected, please check the [list of mandatory audit schools](#). Every high school should review their 2026 cohort, regardless of whether the school was selected for the mandatory audit. If any student appears in the 2026 cohort with an incorrect (non-graduate) cohort status, please submit those students for review through the voluntary graduation rate audit template, located in the [School Accountability & Accreditation Community in Moodle](#). All schools are welcome to participate in the voluntary graduation rate audit, which is the final opportunity to request a change to the 2026 cohort.

Find more information in the [2026-2027 School Accountability Reference Guide](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of School Accountability](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: 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

NEW: Universal Mathematics Screeners Upcoming October Office Hours

The two approved universal mathematics screeners, Curriculum Associates and Forefront Education, will be hosting data-dive office hours for administrators, instructional coaches, educators, and any additional school personnel in late October. These sessions will offer schools an opportunity to learn more about using the data they receive from their adopted universal screener for mathematics to identify students at risk and become familiar with resources that can be used in tiered interventions.

- Curriculum Associates (i-Ready) is holding office hours on Wednesday, October 21, from 3 to 4 p.m. ET. [Register for this Zoom session](#).
- Forefront Education (Universal Screeners for Number Sense) is holding office hours on Tuesday, October 20, from 9 to 10 a.m. ET. The passcode is 295011. [Join the Zoom meeting](#).

Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

NEW: ISPROUT Panelist Discussion Recording

At a recent ISPROUT webinar, Hoosier educator and administrator panelists shared practical strategies for aligning instructional planning with Skills, Knowledge, and Behaviors (SKBs), integrating data to support meaningful team discussions, and applying effective observation techniques. Participants learned how to seamlessly embed ISPROUT into daily curriculum routines, group SKBs to design efficient lessons, make the most of ISPROUT-provided lessons and observation sheets, as well as how to share ISPROUT data with families effectively. You can now access the [webinar video recording](#) as well as the [parking lot](#) for the Q&A and additional resources. Contact IDOE's [Office of Assessment](#) with questions.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

NEW: Industry Certification Reimbursement Payments

Schools will soon receive reimbursement payments for industry certification exams taken during the 2025-2026 school year. Payments are based on data reported in the InTERS system to the Commission for Higher Education by Tuesday, September 1. Details on the upcoming payment process and amounts each school will receive can be found [here](#). Please contact CTE@che.in.gov with any questions.

REMINDER: Work-Based Learning Digital Resource Hub Launched

This week, 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: Tiered System of Supports Live Series - Data Triangulation and Using Individual Math Plan to Support Tiered Intervention

IDOE's Office of Curriculum and Instruction will host a live webinar to support educators and administrators in using the Data Triangulation Process with ILEARN Mathematics Checkpoint data to gain a comprehensive understanding of student needs. Supporting guidance will be shared on using the Individual Math Plan to support tiered intervention. The session will also include time for participant questions. The webinar for grades three to eight will take place on Monday, October 26 at 3 p.m. ET. Use this [Microsoft Teams event link](#) to register. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

NEW: From Coding to Computational Thinking - Professional Development Session

Computer programming and algorithms are core domains of the kindergarten to grade eight Indiana Academic Standards for Computer Science (CS), as well as the widely taught Next Level Program of Studies course 4565: *Computing Foundations for a Digital Age*. Join IDOE's CS Specialist on Wednesday, October 28, at 3 p.m. ET to receive guidance on making programming relevant in the age of artificial intelligence (AI) and obtain resources that allow educators to tailor programming instruction to student needs and highlight essential concepts. A recording of the session will be available in the ["Teach CS and AI with IDOE" series collection](#) following the workshop. [Register for the workshop here](#) and reach out to IDOE's [Curriculum and Instruction team](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: K-12 Mathematics Educators Needed for High-Quality Curricular Materials (HQCM) 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 today, Friday, October 16, to be considered for this collaborative opportunity. 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 HQCM 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: 2026-2027 High Ability Program Grant Next Steps Webinar

The 2026-2027 High Ability Program Grant is designed to support all traditional public and charter schools in identifying and providing services for high ability students in kindergarten through grade 12. High Ability coordinators and district administrators are encouraged to attend the Next Steps training webinar on Wednesday, October 28, at 3:30 p.m. ET. This session will walk through how to

use Euna to submit final reports, cash requests, and budget amendments. Use [this link](#) to join the webinar. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction: High Ability](#) with any questions.

Office of Educational Options and Quality

NEW: Career Scholarship Account (CSA) Program Second Disbursement

CSA providers who are not funded through Class Wallet, should upload invoices to their Google Drive file by Friday, October 23, to receive payment in the second CSA disbursement. Invoices submitted after this deadline will be included in the third disbursement. For full details on invoice submission and payment schedules, please visit the "Funding Information" section on IDOE's [Career Scholarship Account webpage](#).

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 the 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 choiceschool@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.

Office of Educator Talent and Literacy

NEW: Preferred Reading Screener Office Hours Recording and Upcoming Sessions

Those unable to attend the recent September Office Hours for Acadience Kindergarten-Grade Six Reading can now access the Beginning-of-Year [presentation slides](#) and [recording](#).

The next session, "[ALO Tools and Resources Overview](#)," will be held on Wednesday, October 21, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET. Additionally, the final session of the [Acadience Kindergarten-Grade Six Reading: Data-Driven Literacy Instruction series](#), "Data and Mid-Year Readiness," will be held on

Wednesday, December 9, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET. [Register for the live session](#). Contact IDOE's [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: 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

REMINDER: 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: Virtual WIDA Workshop - Exploring WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten on Thursday, November 12

IDOE's English Learning and Multilingual Education team is hosting a virtual workshop, facilitated by WIDA, titled *Exploring WIDA ACCESS for Kindergarten*. This workshop will support educators in understanding the WIDA ACCESS for kindergarten assessment by reviewing its new and updated features. The supplementary Canvas component to this live webinar will provide helpful links, documents, and resources to support test administration. The session will occur Thursday, November 12 from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. ET. [Registration via Jotform](#) is required and limited to three individuals per district. For more information, view the [Indiana EL Professional Development \(PD\) Opportunities Calendar](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Multilingual Education](#) with questions.

NEW: Pyramid Model Fall 2027 Cohort Office Hours

Working to reduce challenging behaviors in young children? The fall 2027 Pyramid Model Cohort application will open in January 2027. Cohort participants will receive, at no cost, full training, ability

to self-train, coaching, lending library access, ongoing consultation after implementation, and more worth an estimated value of over \$30,000. Cohort participants will also be eligible to apply for any project-related grant opportunities. Programs can review a [one-page overview of Indiana's Pyramid Model](#) and can join the [virtual Microsoft Teams open office hours](#) related to implementation and the application on Tuesday, December 1, from 2-3 p.m. ET. Questions about this notice may be directed to pyramidmodel@doe.in.gov.

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 on the [Transition Summit Flyer](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Assessment](#) with questions or for more information.

REMINDER: Monthly New English Learner (EL) Director Professional Learning Community (PLC)

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 [Indiana EL PD Opportunities Calendar](#). Please contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Multilingual Education](#) with questions.

REMINDER: Virtual EL Leadership Meeting

IDOE's Office of English Learning and Multilingual Education will host a virtual EL Leadership Meeting on Thursday, October 29, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. ET. This meeting is intended for Indiana K-12 EL leaders and administrators. The first two hours will include updates and interactive content on timely EL topics. The final hour will be reserved as an open Q&A session for attendees who wish to remain online for additional support. This session will be held in Microsoft Teams, and registration is required to receive the meeting link. For more information and the link to register, view the [Indiana EL PD Opportunities Calendar](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Multilingual Education](#) with any questions.

Office of Title Grants and Support

REMINDER: 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 Titlet@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 Titlet@doe.in.gov with any questions.

Indiana Commission for Higher Education

NEW: New ScholarTrack Account Creation Process

In response to Senate Enrolled Act (SEA) 78 (Wireless Communication Device Policy), the Commission launched a new [ScholarTrack](#) account creation process for students.

- The account confirmation step moved from the middle of the account creation process to the end of the process. Students will be able to create their accounts and log in to ScholarTrack without leaving the browser to access their email. Confirmation emails are still sent to students to verify their accounts. Students must act within 24 hours, or they will need to reset their password.
- An alternative method to verify accounts has been created if the confirmation email is not immediately accessible to students. Scholar PINs are not only used as temporary passwords with ScholarTrack, but they can now be utilized to confirm accounts through the student dashboard.
 - If a student confirms their account with a Scholar PIN, they do not need to confirm their account via email.
- A password visibility eye icon has been added to ScholarTrack for entering passwords and Scholar PINs.

Connect with the Commission's [Outreach Coordinators](#) to set up ScholarTrack account creation workshops for students.

News from Our Partners

NEW: FROM EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTERS OF INDIANA: K-12 Social Studies Curriculum Video Playlist

The Educational Service Centers of Indiana invite district administrative teams and curriculum specialists to explore the newly launched 2026 Indiana Social Studies Curriculum Caravan. The video playlist features dedicated informational sessions from seven major publishers sharing updates, frameworks, and details for K-12 social studies programs. [Register for the virtual playlist](#). Please contact [Keep Indiana Learning](#) with questions.

REMINDER 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 spaceflight. 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](#).

REMINDER 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](#).

REMINDER FROM THE NATIONAL CENTER ON ACCESSIBLE DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS AND INSTRUCTION (NCADEMI): Accessibility Before Accommodation Webinar Series

Join NCADEMI 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.



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