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TEACHER NEWSLETTER

Monthly Updates from the Indiana Department of Education

October 5, 2026

We know that real impact for students happens at the educator-level. In fact, we have seen time and again when teacher leaders are a catalyst for positive change in schools...whether that means adding student opportunities that did not previously exist...or creating connections with higher education and employers that may bring to light career possibilities that a student would not have otherwise considered or imagined. You (our teachers!) are our difference-makers for students, and this newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is dedicated to elevating your work and providing new information and resources to help you do what you do best – and that's serving Indiana's students.



Meet Jason Witzigreuter

2027 Indiana Teacher of the Year

As we pass the torch from the 2026 to the 2027 Indiana Teacher of the Year, our past honoree, Megan Johnson, helps us welcome and introduce the newly named Teacher of the Year, Jason Witzigreuter, through a series of thoughtful questions.

Mr. Witzigreuter's reflections offer a glimpse into the moment he learned of his selection, the experiences that shaped his path, and the hopes he carries into the year ahead.

Together, this transition highlights and celebrates the continuation of leadership, inspiration, and dedication that makes the Teacher of the Year tradition so meaningful.



M: Take us back to the moment you learned you were the 2027 Indiana Teacher of the Year. What was the first thing that went through your mind?

J: I was completely overwhelmed and honored to have been named Indiana Teacher of the Year. And to see my close family and friends in the front row experiencing this with me, I will never forget.

M: Before anyone knew you as Indiana Teacher of the Year, who were you as a teacher?

J: My students and colleagues know me as humble, caring, validating, and a good listener.

M: What would your students say makes your classroom your classroom?

J: My students would say they feel comfortable and know they can take risks in my classroom. They would say I listen and care deeply for them and want them to succeed and be great at everything they put their mind to. They know they can come to me with anything and I will do my best to support them so that they can become the best versions of themselves. And they would definitely say that I like to say "it's fun to be good." Whether that's being good at playing music, academically, in sports, as humans, and in life, finding those things in their lives that they truly love and going after them, being as good at them as possible, will make their wildest dreams come true.

M: What is something about Indiana teachers or students you hope to use it to talk about?

J: Building meaningful positive relationships. Sometimes we get so absorbed in the daily grind that we forget why we do what we do. In the classroom, the trusting connection adults can build with their students can make a lifelong difference for a child. Teachers have one of the most unique positions in the world to help children form into incredible adults. To help guide them to find a path that will eventually lead them to a happy, productive life.

M: What is happening in your classroom, school, or area of education right now that you wish more people knew about?

J: Middle and high school kids are great young people. They are kind, loving, caring individuals who truly are doing great things in and for our schools and communities. I experience kids putting in tremendous amounts of extra time into an activity they love, playing music and learning as a team, working through how to manage time, and establishing goals and accomplishing those goals. It's impressive to experience what children are doing in our own schools that positively impacts our world.





M: A first-year teacher and a 30-year veteran will both read this. What would you want to say to Indiana educators as we settle into another school year?

J: Have fun teaching children. Have fun trying new things and never be afraid to dig in a little deeper than what you had in the past. Experiment and reach out to amazing colleagues and never be afraid to admit you need help. Twenty-nine years in education and I reach out to my brilliant colleagues all the time to see if I can find a better way to help my students. Enjoy every minute of this awesome work we are blessed to do each day.

M: A year from now, what would make you look back and think, “I used this opportunity well?”

J: If my colleagues told me they stepped out of their comfort zone, tried something new, put themselves out there in a different way, and found success with their students.

M: What is one thing you hope to learn this year? Not as Teacher of the Year, but as a teacher?

J: I hope to learn new ways to reach more students and help them find joy in their learning. I hope I continue to learn from my colleagues, friends, and family in new ways so that I can be the best teacher possible for my students.

M: What's one classroom resource, routine, book, website, or tool you couldn't imagine teaching without?

J: As a music teacher I live on Spotify and YouTube and other digital platforms that help my students listen, compose, and experiment with their music learning.



Top Stories

NEW: Indiana's Cybersecurity Pathway Comes to Life

With the launch of the Indiana Cybersecurity Partnership in May 2026, Indiana became the first state in the nation to build a strategic, military-aligned cybersecurity pathway connecting high schools, two- and four-year institutions, the National Guard, and employers, positioning Indiana as a national leader in cybersecurity education.

Last week, Governor Braun and Dr. Jenner had the opportunity to see this work up close in Greene County, where Bloomfield Middle and High School is creating extraordinary opportunities for students. In a district of less than 900 students, Bloomfield is a leader in cybersecurity education, preparing students for high-demand careers and strengthening the security of our state and nation. During the event, they visited Michelle Mattox's STEM classroom where students showcased what they're learning in PLTW Cybersecurity and AP Cybersecurity. Read more about Bloomfield's work in [Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update](#) and learn more about bringing this pathway to your community at IDOE's [cybersecurity_pathways webpage](#).



STEM Supports

NEW: 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 on 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.

NEW: 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.

NEW: Launching the First Two “*Making the Shift: Elevating Mathematics Instruction*” Courses in the Learning Lab

The first two courses in the *Making the Shift: Elevating Mathematics Instruction* professional development series are available in the Indiana Learning Lab.

1. [How Students Learn Mathematics](#) is the introductory course and the first of five in the series. It lays the foundation for understanding current learning theory as it relates to mathematics. In this course, mathematics educators and leaders will explore how learning theory informs content learning, teaching practices, and learning progressions.
2. [Foundations of Mathematics: Kindergarten - Grade Two](#) 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 the 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 courses on the [Indiana Learning Lab](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.



Indiana Literacy Center

NEW: The Reading League Indiana Presents 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. Find more information and registration details on the [Science of Reading: Experts Explain Series flyer](#). Contact IDOE's [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.



Assessment Updates

NEW: Preferred Reading Screener Recordings

IDOE is pleased to announce the new [Acadience Kindergarten to Grade Six Reading: Data-Driven Literacy Instruction](#) collection. These sessions are part of a five-part series that offer deeper guidance on using Acadience data to drive instruction. Educators can access these on-demand resources directly within the [Indiana Learning Lab](#).

1. [Decoding the Legislation: The Why Behind Acadience Reading Kindergarten to Grade Six](#)
2. [From Blueprint to Classroom: Launching Your Acadience Plan](#)
3. [Targeted Literacy Action: Progress Monitoring and Grouping](#)
4. [State Guidance in Action: Data-Driven Reflection and Adjustments](#)

To conclude the series, please [register](#) for the live session, "Data & Mid-Year Readiness," scheduled for Wednesday, December 9, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET. Contact IDOE's [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

NEW: K-2 Universal Mathematics Screener Guidance - Additional Support Materials

Additional materials are now available to support educators, schools, and corporations implementing the [Universal Mathematics Screener Guidance for Kindergarten through Grade Two](#). [Applying the Data Triangulation Process \(K-2\)](#) is a two-page resource that outlines suggested grade-level numeracy standards and provides a detailed walkthrough of how to apply the data triangulation process after each administration of the Universal Mathematics Screeners. The optional [K-2 Mathematics Data Triangulation Workbook](#) is also available to further support the triangulation process, guide development of intervention goals and services, and assist with progress monitoring and parent communication. Contact IDOE's [Office of Assessment](#) with questions.

REMINDER: Virtual Transition to Kindergarten Summit

Join IDOE on Wednesday, November 4, from 1 to 2:30 p.m. ET for the 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 any questions or for more information.



Indiana Learning Lab

NEW: Artificial Intelligence (AI) On-Demand Session Now Available

As educators continue to explore actionable strategies for strengthening AI literacy and responsible use in their professional workflows, [this on-demand session](#) presented by Hunter Hickman from Rensselaer High School, provides practical tips as a user and professional educator in the age of AI. Contact IDOE's [Digital Learning Team](#) with any questions and explore the [live calendar of events](#) for future workshops.

NEW: On-Demand Professional Development

Throughout the school year, IDOE hosts sessions in the Indiana Learning Lab on a variety of topics. September's live session recordings are now available on-demand below:

- [Assistive Technology for Students with ADHD](#)
- [Identifying Gifted English/Multilingual Learners: Effective Strategies to Close Service Gaps](#)
- [Charter School Community of Practice - Tools to Manage Direct Reports, Peers, and Vendors](#)
- [Teaching Interdisciplinary Data Science Skills in Computer Science](#)

Attend [live sessions](#) and view [other on-demand content](#) in the [Indiana Learning Lab](#). Contact IDOE's [Digital Learning Team](#) with any questions.



Curriculum and Instruction

REMINDER: High Ability Coordinator Workshop

Join IDOE for an engaging, hands-on workshop designed to support high ability coordinators. This in-person session will provide essential guidance, practical tools, and opportunities to collaborate with peers as we strengthen consistent, statewide practices for high ability programming. All workshops will be held from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. local time. Register [here](#) for one of the remaining regional workshops. Contact IDOE'S [Office of Curriculum and Instruction: High Ability](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: High Ability Differentiation Series Final Session

Join IDOE and high ability experts for the Unlocking Potential: High Ability Differentiation Series in the Learning Lab. High ability educators, coordinators, and administrators are invited to [register now](#) for the final session in the series addressing strategies for supporting multilingual high ability learners. Educators unable to attend the earlier sessions can now access the [full collection](#) of recordings and resources in the Indiana Learning Lab. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction: High Ability](#) with any questions.



From Our Partners

NEW FROM ND PACT (formerly AP-TIP): Annual Online Fall Conference

ND PACT's annual fall conference will focus on "*Small Teaching: How Simple Shifts Can Bridge the Gap from Access to Achievement*." James Lang, PhD, will lead the keynote session each morning at 9 a.m. ET, followed by content-specific sessions from 10 a.m. to 3:55 p.m. ET. Participants will have a 30-minute break for lunch each day.

- English: Tuesday, October 27
- Math and Computer Science: Wednesday, October 28
- Science: Thursday, October 29

[Registration](#) is now open and daily conference agendas are coming soon. Contact [Nikki Chase](#) for additional assistance.

NEW FROM DYSLEXIA INSTITUTE OF INDIANA: Until Everyone Can Read Literacy Summit for Older Students

As part of the 2026 Until Everyone Can Read Literacy Summit for Older Students, Dr. Anita Archer's presentation, "Requesting Frequent Responses: The Heartbeat of Adolescent Literacy Instruction" is now [available](#) in the Indiana Learning Lab.

Join us for the remaining sessions of the free "Until Everyone Can Read Literacy Summit for Older Students" sponsored by the Lilly Endowment. All sessions will focus on supporting older students who struggle with reading, with different speakers and topics for each session. All sessions will be held via Zoom from 9 to 10:30 a.m. ET. on the second Saturday of the month now to December. Register [here](#) to reserve your free spot to learn from experts about literacy for older students. Experts include Dr. Anita Archer, Dr. Julie Brown, Dr. Stephanie Stoller, and Elfreida Heibert. Contact [Dyslexia Institute of Indiana](#) with any questions.

NEW FROM INDIANA YOUTH INSTITUTE: Local College and Career Connects

Indiana Youth Institute (IYI), in partnership with regional partners, will host a series of no-cost Local College and Career Connects events this fall. These events are designed to strengthen local college and career readiness efforts and will bring together youth-serving professionals, educators, school counselors, higher education representatives, workforce development leaders, employers, and community partners to explore local priorities, share resources and promising practices, strengthen partnerships, and identify actionable next steps for supporting young people. All youth serving professionals are welcome to attend. Each event will run from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. local time and lunch will be provided for all registered participants. Find dates, locations, and [register on IYI's webpage](#). Contact [Nathan Foor](#) with any questions.



Additional Resources

- [Educator Licensing](#)
- [Educator Supply/Demand Marketplace](#)
- [Indiana Special Education Assisted Licensure Program \(I-SEAL\)](#)
- [Indiana Teachers of English Learners Licensure \(I-TELL\)](#)
- [Indiana STEM Educator Expansion Program \(I-STEM\)](#)

- [Indiana Learning Lab](#)
- [Indiana Literacy Cadre](#)
- [Teacher of the Year](#)

Weekly Updates

View previous weekly updates from Dr. Katie Jenner [here](#).

Stay Informed

Did you miss a message? View previous weekly emails [here](#).

Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update from the Indiana Department of Education is distributed every Friday morning.

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