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Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update

Weekly Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education

January 23, 2026

A Message from Dr. Katie Jenner

Every year, right before kickoff at the College Football National Championship game, state teachers of the year from across the country are honored on the field. These incredible teachers receive the MVP treatment all weekend and at the big game, they – and all of our nation's teachers – are celebrated in front of thousands of fans (with millions more watching at home!).

This year's game was extra special for our 2025 Indiana Teacher of the Year – **Mrs. Graciela Miranda** – as our own Indiana Hoosiers made their *first* college football championship appearance ever. And as we now know, they are officially the NATIONAL CHAMPIONS!!!

On Monday night at the game, Graciela represented all Indiana teachers and all who love Indiana, while proudly sporting her cream and crimson. We had a chance to catch up with her after the big game, and here is what she shared about her experience...



"Walking out of the tunnel onto the 10-yard mark on the field surrounded by amazing educators was unbelievable. I could hear all the applause and cheers from the audience, which brought so much pride to the work that we, as educators, do every day. At that moment, I felt that we were all acknowledged and celebrated; it was a confirmation that our work matters, that we matter."

"My favorite memory of the game was at the end, when Jamari Sharpe had the interception that closed the game. At that point, the IU Nation roared with cheers, people high-fived each other, and the crowd began to scream 'HOO HOO HOO HOOSIERS!' followed by the singing of IU's fight song. The energy was unbelievable!!!"

"It was truly one of the best memories I'll always hold on to." – Graciela



What an incredible experience to recognize one of our top Indiana teachers, and especially in an environment where the majority of fans were Hoosiers! Congratulations, Graciela, and thank you for continuing to represent our state!

I also want to give a big shout out to Coach Curt Cignetti and the entire team on their historic, perfect season. This is a story that captivated our state...and our country—and as we all know now, will undoubtedly be a movie someday! One of my favorite quotes was when Indiana was given the national championship trophy—Coach Cignetti shared his own story about work ethic and the power of believing in himself and dreaming big. He shared such a great reminder for all of us, as individuals, and as educators who are inspiring the next generation of students. Listen to Coach Cignetti's message [here](#).

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

Legislative Guidance

REMINDER: School Year 2025-2026 Teacher Appreciation Grants

Proposed House Bill 1266 includes clarifying language that FICA and TRF *remain allowable expenses from the Teacher Appreciation Grant (TAG) appropriation*. Each school corporation has the flexibility to determine if and how to utilize TAG distributions for FICA and TRF expenses associated with the stipends. Further guidance on the School Year 2025-2026 Teacher Appreciation Grant (TAG) can be found [here](#). The [TAG Application](#), including the [TAG Eligible Educators Report](#), is due by Friday, January 30. Questions may be directed to TAG@doe.in.gov.

Office of Accountability

REMINDER: 2025 Federal Accountability Audit Closes Today, Friday, January 23

2025 federal accountability was released in an embargoed form to all public schools via the [accountability portal](#) on December 19, 2025, which started the review period. Any issues that are identified through this review should be submitted through a data audit. Information regarding submitting a federal accountability audit can be found on Moodle in the School Accountability & Accreditation Community in the Federal Accountability System/Audit Information folder. The deadline

to submit a federal accountability audit is today, Friday, January 23. Contact the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE's) [Office of Accountability](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: 2025-2026 Petition to Seek Performance-Based State Accreditation Submission Window Open

The submission window for non-public schools to submit a petition for [performance-based state accreditation](#) is open through Tuesday, March 31. Petitions must be completed and submitted to IDOE prior to the school year for which accreditation would begin. Schools are encouraged to submit a Notice of Intent form to alert IDOE of their intent to submit a petition. Please note that once a school submits a [Notice of Intent](#), they have three weeks to submit its application. To submit the notice and petition, or for questions, contact IDOE's [Office of Accountability](#).

Office of Assessment

REMINDER: ILEARN English/Language Arts Released Performance Tasks and Student Writing Samples

IDOE's collection of [Released ILEARN Performance Tasks for English/Language Arts](#) has been updated to include one example of each writing genre (persuasive/argumentative, informative, and narrative) for each grade level. Scored student writing samples for each performance task have also been updated. Scoring annotations for the student writing samples will be updated by the end of February. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: ILEARN Educator Hand Scoring Applications Open Now

Educators interested in scoring written student responses for the ILEARN 3-8 Spring 2026 administration can apply to be hand scorers through Tuesday, March 17, by submitting this [application](#). This is a paid opportunity. Educators will use rubrics and criteria to score student ILEARN responses with the hand scoring vendor, Data Recognition Corporation (DRC), and staffing partner, BCForward. Refer to the [Indiana Educator Scoring Opportunity Flyer](#) and [Indiana Educator Scoring Opportunity FAQ](#) for more information. For any additional questions, please contact the [Indiana Assessment Help Desk](#).

REMINDER: ILEARN Checkpoint School Leader Toolkit and Data Videos Now Available

The ILEARN Checkpoint [School Leader Toolkit](#) and [data video series](#) are now available on the [Indiana Learning Lab](#) within the [Learning & Assessment Hub](#). This toolkit is designed to support school leaders in preparing for, administering, and responding to the ILEARN Checkpoints. The ILEARN Checkpoint data video series includes guidance about the available data points, a demonstration of how users can view and extract data, answers to commonly asked questions, and sample Individual Student Reports (ISRs). Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

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

REMINDER: Nominations Open for the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program

The U.S. Presidential Scholars Program recognizes and honors outstanding high school seniors and encourages high attainment among all students. This [memo](#) outlines the required qualifications and nomination process, as well as contains links for the general, career, and technical education (CTE), and arts applications. Nominations must be submitted by 11:45 p.m. ET on Sunday, January 25, to be considered. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Participants Needed for Indiana's K-12 Social Studies Standards Revision Committees

IDOE's Office of Curriculum and Instruction continues to recruit interested educators (e.g., classroom teachers, special educators, curriculum directors, higher education) and other stakeholders (e.g., parents) to comprise committees that will review the Indiana Academic Standards for K-12 Social Studies. Additional educators are especially needed for a few grade levels (kindergarten through grade four) and several courses (U.S. Government, Economics, Indiana Studies, Geography and History of the World, and World Geography). Interested individuals should complete and submit [this form](#) to be considered for this collaborative opportunity. IDOE will review all submissions and select participants based on many criteria (e.g., teaching experience, current role, student populations served) to help maximize representativeness of each committee. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: 2026 Indiana Academic Standards for World Language Now Available

The Indiana State Board of Education (SBOE) approved updated K-12 Indiana Academic Standards for World Language (Classical Modern, East Asian, Heritage Language, American Sign Language, and K-12 American Sign Language) per the regularly scheduled standards revision cycle pursuant to Indiana Code 20-31-3-2. All updated standards are now accessible on [IDOE's Indiana Academic Standards webpage](#). IDOE extends special thanks to all educators who served as committee reviewers and the Indiana School for the Deaf for their partnership throughout this process, as well as everyone who participated in the public comment process. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Register for the Digital Learning Coach Camp on Tuesday, March 10

Digital learning coaches are invited to join IDOE for Digital Learning Coach Camp on Tuesday, March 10, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET at the Central Indiana Education Services Center (CIESC). This free professional collaboration and learning opportunity for those in educational technology coaching roles is a round-table style, one-day event that brings together coaches from across the state. Register for this opportunity using [this form](#). Contact IDOE's [Digital Learning Team](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Register for Middle School Advanced Mathematics Auto-Enrollment Office Hours

IDOE's Office of Curriculum and Instruction will host office hours from noon to 1 p.m. ET on Thursday, January 29, for counselors and administrators serving students in grades six through eight. This live session will include a brief overview of the legislation related to Indiana Code 20-30-18-3 and the latest guidance, followed by time for Q&A. Use this [link](#) to register. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Middle School Advanced Mathematics Course Auto-Enrollment FAQ Updates

IDOE's Office of Curriculum and Instruction has updated the [frequently asked questions](#) document released in the November 21, 2025, [memo](#) related to Indiana Code 20-30-18-3. The updated document includes additional guidance on student placement, educator licensing, course structure, high school credit policies, and key timelines for upcoming support and resources. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Computer Science (CS) Education Webinar - Celebrating 10 Years and Looking to the Future

In 2026, Indiana is reflecting on a decade of growth in CS education and looking to revise the strategic state CS plan as new goals supporting the computer science graduation requirement and artificial intelligence literacy have emerged. Join IDOE's computer science specialist for a virtual presentation on the state of CS education in Indiana from 4 to 4:45 p.m. ET on Friday, January 30. Learn about progress in Indiana CS, explore upcoming CS initiatives, discover ways to support the

revision of the state strategic plan, and ask questions on CS efforts around the state. Access additional details and register to attend [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

Office of Educator Talent and the Literacy Center

NEW: The Literacy Leadership Series Workshop, "From Identification to Instruction: Making MTSS Work for Adolescent Readers"

Join IDOE for the next Literacy Leadership Series workshop, "From Identification to Instruction: Making MTSS Work for Adolescent Readers," from 2 to 3 p.m. ET on Tuesday, January 23, with Elisabeth Lamoureaux from The Reading League. Starting in January and continuing through April, the IDOE Literacy Leadership Series is a high-impact series specially designed for district and school leaders, school board members, instructional coaches, and literacy specialists. The live, on-demand virtual series in the Indiana Learning Lab will feature national reading science and systems design experts and showcase critical research and guidance, as well as resources to support practice toward evidence-based literacy instruction and building comprehensive literacy support systems for improving student outcomes. Access the [series flyer](#) for more information regarding topics and dates. Contact the [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Monthly Data Interpretation Office Hours Acadience Reading Preferred Universal Screener

Acadience Learning, Inc. will host monthly office hours this school year to support school leaders and educators as they interpret the data from the state's preferred screener. Office hours will begin at 10:30 a.m. ET on Wednesday, February 4. Click [here](#) to join. Learn more information by visiting the [Indiana Acadience webpage](#). Contact the [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: New and Improved Statewide Educator Job Board Now LIVE

IDOE is excited to announce an improved [statewide educator job board](#) hosted by [Nimble](#). These improvements are designed to make it even easier for teachers to discover Indiana teaching jobs and for districts to get in front of more applicants.

With the improved job board, teachers can:

- Browse statewide teaching vacancies all in one place
- Use advanced search filters to find roles aligned with their preferences
- View key information upfront, including salary schedules and commute times
- Connect directly with principals for real conversations
- Receive personalized recommendations for schools that align with their values, strengths, and needs
- Create one Nimble profile to easily apply to schools statewide

Stay tuned for additional improvements, including a new teacher job matching app. Both the job board and the matching service are completely **free** for Indiana teachers and districts. Teachers can sign up by following [this link](#). Indiana districts not yet participating can click [here](#) to learn more about this free recruitment and hiring resource brought to you by IDOE and Nimble.

Office of School Finance

REMINDER: Form 9 Data Due Saturday, January 31

Form 9 financial data for the period of July to December 2025 can now be submitted. The deadline for Form 9 submissions is Saturday, January 31. The Form 9 application can be accessed via the [LINK Portal](#). Once in the portal, the financial administrator will navigate to the "Form 9" tile. Financial

transparency information can also be submitted through the portal. Please contact form9@doe.in.gov with any questions.

REMINDER: Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Indirect Cost Rates Application Information

The window to apply for Indirect Cost Rates is open until Tuesday, March 31. Restricted and unrestricted indirect costs rates are calculated and certified only to entities that provide Form 9 financial information. New Form 9-reporting schools are eligible to apply, but will be subject to the median rate. Please see [this memo](#) for more information. Questions can be sent to icr@doe.in.gov.

Office of School Support and Transformation

REMINDER: Annual 1003 Flexibility Waivers

IDOE's Office of School Support and Transformation is now [accepting applications](#) for 1003 Flexibility Waivers. Flexibility through waivers is offered to help support schools in their design efforts to improve student performance and outcomes, improve the efficiency of school operations, and promote innovative educational approaches to student learning. Read more about this opportunity in this [memo](#) and [Flexibility Guide for Indiana's K-12 Schools](#). Applications are now open and will be accepted on a rolling basis through Friday, April 24. Submitted applications will be reviewed by the State Board of Education during the following months: March, May, and July 2026. Contact [Georgia Watson](#) with any questions.

Offices of Special Education, English Learning, and Migrant Education

NEW: Save the Date - Certificate of Multilingual Proficiency (CoMP) Informational Meeting

Indiana's Certificate of Multilingual Proficiency (CoMP) benefits secondary multilingual students by validating their fluency across multiple languages. To learn more, join an informational webinar on Tuesday, March 10, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. ET. Participation, implementation, and guidance updates will be discussed. No registration is required, and the access link can be found on the [Indiana EL Professional Development Opportunities Calendar](#). More information can be found on the [IDOE CoMP webpage](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Migrant Education](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: WIDA-facilitated Workshop - Bringing Language into Focus: Expectations, Functions, and Features

Join us for a virtual two-part workshop, facilitated by WIDA, titled Bringing Language into Focus: Expectations, Functions, and Features. These sessions are designed to give K-12 educators an opportunity to take a closer look at the Key Language Uses (genre families) by engaging in a deeper exploration of Language Expectations, Language Functions, and Language Features. Participants will learn the importance and purpose of mentor texts to make language visible to students. Part one will take place on Thursday, February 26, and part two will take place on Thursday, March 5. Both sessions will occur from 3:30 to 5 p.m. ET. Registration is required via [this Jotform](#) by Friday, January 30, as space is limited. Contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Migrant Education](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: IDOE Special Programs for Multilingual Learners Office Hours

IDOE's Office of English Learning and Migrant Education is hosting a virtual office hours session on Thursday, January 29, at 3 p.m. ET to provide support for IDOE Special Programs, the statewide platform used to house Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and additional documentation for multilingual learners. In this session, updates to EL-related features of the system will be reviewed,

along with time for questions from the field. Visit the [Indiana EL Professional Development Opportunities Calendar](#) for the meeting link. Contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Migrant Education](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Proportionate Share/CEIS/CCEIS Monitoring Reports

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B FY24-FY26 proportionate share/CEIS/CCEIS semi-annual monitoring reports for the period July 1 through December 31, 2025, are due on Friday, January 30. The monitoring reports can be found in the [Office of Special Education Community Moodle](#). Submit the completed workbook and signed PDF via email to IDOE's [Office of Special Education Part B grants team](#), and contact your fiscal specialist with additional questions

REMINDER: Educational Benefit Review Pilot Grant Opportunity

IDOE's Office of Special Education is inviting 15 local educational agencies (LEAs) and charter schools to participate in [piloting an Educational Benefit Review \(EBR\) process](#) through a grant opportunity. Total grant awards will range from \$5,000 to \$25,000. An EBR is a structured process for evaluating whether an IEP is reasonably calculated to provide educational benefits to a student with a disability. This involves examining past and present IEPs (usually three years) to determine if the student is making appropriate progress and if the IEP is being adjusted correctly to meet changing needs. This grant provides funding for substitute teachers, travel, and associated costs that enable training of the LEA's EBR team. View a recording of the [grant application informational meeting](#) to learn more details, and apply for the Educational Benefit Review Pilot Grant [here](#). Contact EBRpilotgrant@doe.in.gov with questions.

Office of Title Grants and Support

REMINDER: January Coffee Chat

Join the Title Grants and Support team for monthly Coffee Chats! Coffee Chats are on the last Thursday of the month at 10 a.m. ET. January's topic will cover equitable services. Please join us via Microsoft Teams [here](#) on Thursday, January 29, and forward this link to any necessary stakeholders within your district. Contact Titel@doe.in.gov with any questions.

Indiana Commission for Higher Education

REMINDER: 2026-2027 Course Eligibility Memo

The following [guidance](#) on eligible courses for the 2026-2027 school year has been developed to support implementation of the new high school diploma. This guidance provides updates from the course eligibility memo released in April 2025, including additional clarification on course eligibility for the Enrollment Honors Seal. Contact [IDOE's Engagement Team](#) or the [Indiana Commission for Higher Education's \(the Commission's\) CTE team](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: 2026-2027 FAFSA Completion Badges

The Commission is now offering three FAFSA Completion badges for high schools. Returning is the 60% completion badge for all schools that achieve the state's goal of 60% FAFSA completion for high school seniors. New this year is a 5% increase badge for all high schools that achieve a 5% increase in FAFSA filing rates compared to last year, as well as an 85% completion badge. These badges can be proudly displayed in your email signature, on your website, and across social media. You can track your school's progress on the [FAFSA Completion Dashboard](#). If you have questions, please contact your [Outreach Coordinator](#).

REMINDER: FAFSA Filing Events Calendar

You can find an updated calendar of FAFSA-filing events happening around the state on [LearnMoreIndiana.org](https://www.learnmoreindiana.org). If your school has an event, please email details to Victoria Phair at VPhair@che.in.gov.

Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

NEW: Braille Challenge Opportunity for Students

The Indiana School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ISBVI) is thrilled to host students from across Indiana for the Braille Institute of America's Braille Challenge on Saturday, January 31! This is Indiana's only academic contest specifically for students who are blind or have low vision, featuring tests in reading comprehension, spelling, speed and accuracy, proofreading, and tactile graphics, which are qualifiers for the national competition in Los Angeles in June. This regional event welcomes students at every stage of their braille journey, in a spirit of camaraderie and skill-building. Contact Cara Burchett, Director of ISBVI Outreach and Indiana Regional Braille Challenge Coordinator via email at cburchett@isbvik12.org or via phone 317-253-1481 x 221 with any questions.

Throughout the second semester, ISBVI will continue offering L.E.A.D.S. (Learners Excelling, Achieving, Dreaming, Succeeding) workshops for statewide students, including Leap into L.E.A.D.S. (grades K-5) and L.E.A.D.S. (grades 6-12) sessions. All workshops are focused on Expanded Core Curriculum areas. To learn more and to register, click [here](#).

News From Our Partners

NEW FROM EAST CENTRAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE CENTER (ECESC): Professional Development Opportunity on Indiana's New Diploma and Readiness Seals

Discover how Indiana's new high school diploma and readiness seals are shaping college, career, and military readiness. Learn how seals align with credentials of value and work-based learning through real examples and collaborative discussion, plus practical tools to support implementation. This session is designed for principals, counselors, and curriculum coordinators and will take place on Friday, February 6, at ECESC in New Castle. Click here to [register](#).

REMINDER FROM TEACH INDY: 2026 Educators Conference

The 2026 Teach Indy Educators Conference is coming on Saturday, March 7, to the Ivy Tech Culinary and Conference Center. This year's theme, Supporting Unique Teachers to Serve Unique Students, celebrates the brilliance in every learner. All sessions are created and led by educators to ensure every session is practical, relevant, and grounded in real classroom experience. Learn more and register at teachindynow.org.



Weekly Updates

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

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