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Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update

Weekly Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education

February 20, 2026

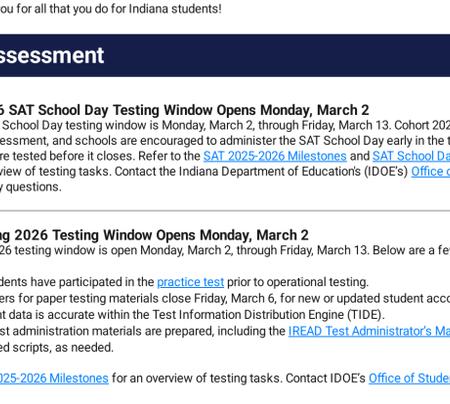
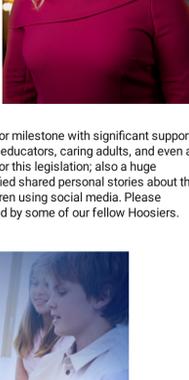
A Message from Dr. Katie Jenner

This week's warmer temperatures brought dangerous storms across the state, including multiple tornadoes yesterday. We don't often see tornadoes this early in the year, so thank you for your local preparedness and for putting student safety first!

This weather is a reminder that spring is just around the corner...and with that, the end of the 2026 legislative session is also fast approaching. Last week I [highlighted a key piece of legislation](#) currently moving through the legislative process that is aimed at better protecting Indiana's children from the negative impacts of social media—specifically requiring **parental consent** for children to be on social media, as well as prohibiting **addictive, harmful design features**.

In a recent statewide survey, **over half of Indiana middle school students said they are on social media for three or more hours each day**. As educators and parents, we now know more about the negative impact that this has on a child's academic outcomes, as well as their mental health. For many students, it is an addiction, with consequences similar to those experienced with other addictions, such as tobacco, drugs, or alcohol.

This past Tuesday, important social media legislation cleared another major milestone with significant support in the Indiana House of Representatives. A huge thank you to the parents, educators, caring adults, and even a courageous student who testified at the Indiana Statehouse to advocate for this legislation; also a huge shoutout to the legislators who are carrying this forward. Those who testified shared personal stories about the negative impacts they have witnessed and/or experienced related to children using social media. Please consider taking time to hear the personal stories and important data shared by some of our fellow Hoosiers. Check out the video below.



It is inspiring to see so many Hoosiers standing up to protect our children from the negative impacts of social media. By empowering parents and better protecting students from social media, we have the ability to change lives for the better, just as we do each day through education.

As always, thank you for all that you do for Indiana students!

Office of Assessment

NEW: Spring 2026 SAT School Day Testing Window Opens Monday, March 2
The Spring 2026 SAT School Day testing window is Monday, March 2, through Friday, March 13. Cohort 2027 students must participate in the assessment, and schools are encouraged to administer the SAT School Day early in the testing window to ensure all students are tested before it closes. Refer to the [SAT 2025-2026 Milestones](#) and [SAT School Day Test Window Checklist](#) for an overview of testing tasks. Contact the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE's) [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

NEW: IREAD Spring 2026 Testing Window Opens Monday, March 2
The IREAD Spring 2026 testing window is open Monday, March 2, through Friday, March 13. Below are a few reminders:

- Ensure all students have participated in the [practice test](#) prior to operational testing.
- Additional orders for paper testing materials close Friday, March 6, for new or updated student accommodations.
- Ensure student data is accurate within the Test Information Distribution Engine (TIDE).
- Ensure that test administration materials are prepared, including the [IREAD Test Administrator's Manual \(TAM\)](#) and accommodated scripts, as needed.

Refer to the [IREAD 2025-2026 Milestones](#) for an overview of testing tasks. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: 2025-2026 Cambridge International Math and Science Grant Recipients
IDOE is pleased to announce the six recipients of the 2025-2026 Cambridge International Math and Science Grant. This competitive grant opportunity offers schools funds for the purpose of supporting programs dedicated to increasing student enrollment and improving student scores in math and science Cambridge International courses. Review this [memo](#) for a list of the winners. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

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

NEW: 2026 Digital Learning Grant Application Now Open
The 2026 Digital Learning Grant application is now open! This opportunity is available to any Indiana public school corporation or public charter school. The deadline to apply is Monday, April 6. Review this [memo](#) for additional information, and join the Digital Learning team for an information session on Wednesday, February 25, at 1:30 p.m. ET to learn more. Use [this link](#) to join. Contact IDOE's [Digital Learning Team](#) with any questions.

NEW: STEM Certified Schools Quarterly Meeting
IDOE recently met with schools that are in the process of becoming STEM-certified. The recording of the Wednesday, February 11, meeting can be found [here](#). A guide on what to expect from a STEM Certified Schools Site Visit can be found [here](#). All resources related to STEM Certified Schools can be found in the [STEM Certified Schools Toolkit](#) in the Indiana Learning Lab. Please contact stemcertification@doe.in.gov with any questions.

NEW: Example Scope and Sequence for Auto-Enrollment
IDOE has developed a [sample scope and sequence](#) to support middle schools in implementing automatic enrollment in advanced mathematics courses, as required by [Indiana Code 20-30-18-3](#). This resource provides one example of a grade six through eight standards progression that aligns with the auto-enrollment guidance and criteria previously shared by IDOE. This sample is designed to assist schools in making informed local instructional decisions for advanced math courses and is not a requirement. Additional samples will be released as part of IDOE's ongoing support for auto-enrollment implementation. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: High-Quality Curricular Materials Advisory List Available for NLPs Course 4565 Computing Foundations for a Digital Age
IDOE published a list identifying additional high-quality curricular material options in support of schools' implementation of Indiana's Next Level Program of Studies (NLPs) course 4565 *Computing Foundations for a Digital Age*. An overview of the review process and requirements per the K-12 STEM evaluation rubric are outlined in this [memo](#). Cost sheets for approved vendor curricular materials are available on IDOE's [High-Quality Curricular Materials Advisory Lists webpage](#). Contact HQCM@doe.in.gov with any questions.

REMINDER: Collaborative Transitions to Kindergarten - Creating Community Cohorts Collection
The [Collaborative Transitions to Kindergarten: Creating Community Cohorts](#) collection in the Indiana Learning Lab brings together multiple components, providing schools and early learning programs with practical tools to build cross-sector collaboration and create a year-long, cohesive plan that aligns with the school year and strengthens teamwork across the process. This collection explains the process for both developing and implementing, based on a 2025 pilot and the Kindergarten Transition Model, and includes all necessary accompanying resources and recommended professional development for schools and early learning programs to engage in together. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Artificial Intelligence (AI) Educator Survey Final Report Now Available
The [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) Educator Survey Final Report](#) is now available for the 2024-2025 Digital Learning Grant. A priority of this grant was to support local projects that utilized AI-powered platforms to support student tutoring and teacher administrative task support. The final report provides background information on the grant and awardees, teacher feedback data from 2,096 survey responses, and AI platform data. Contact IDOE's [Digital Learning Team](#) with any questions.

Office of Educator Preparation

NEW: Public Comment Window for Indiana Educator Standards
Three committees composed of content area experts from higher education and preschool-12 schools were convened to develop new educator preparation standards for School Social Worker, Director of Career and Technical Education, and Director of Curriculum and Instruction. The draft standards are available for public comment through 5 p.m. ET on Friday, March 20.

Use the following Jotforms to access the draft standards and detailed instructions for participating in this process:

- [School Social Worker](#)
- [Director of Career and Technical Education](#)
- [Director of Curriculum and Instruction](#)

This input will be used to refine standards, and final recommendations will be presented to the Indiana State Board of Education later this year. Please contact [Scott Boggs](mailto:Scott.Boggs@doe.in.gov) with any questions.

Office of Educator Talent and Literacy Center

NEW: The Literacy Leadership Series Workshop, "Bringing Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction to Life within Secondary Content-Area Classrooms, Part 2"
Join IDOE for the next Literacy Leadership Series workshop, "Bringing Evidence-Based Literacy Instruction to Life within Secondary Content-Area Classrooms, Part 2," from 2 to 3 p.m. ET on Tuesday, February 24, with Genevieve Thomas, President of Spark Education Consulting. [Part 1 of this workshop](#) is available for on-demand viewing in the Indiana Learning Lab. 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, guidance, and 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: Disciplinary Literacy Guidance
[Disciplinary Literacy Guidance](#) is now available to support educators and schools. Further information can be found in the [Disciplinary Literacy Collection](#) of the [Adolescent Literacy Hub](#) in the Indiana Learning Lab. 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 25. Click [here](#) to join. Learn more information by visiting the Indiana Acadience webpage [here](#). Contact the [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

Office of School Finance

REMINDER: Membership Conflict Petition Process
The window to submit a membership conflict petition is now open. This [memo](#) details the process. Friday, March 13, 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: Form 9 Memo for January to June 2026
Please read the following [memo](#) regarding updates for the January to June 2026 Form 9 financial data submission and the chart of accounts. If you have questions, please email IDOE's [Office of School Finance](#).

REMINDER: Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 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 Student Pathways and Opportunities

REMINDER: Ordering Diploma Materials for the 2025-2026 School Year
Each year, accredited Indiana high schools must report the total number of students expected to graduate with each diploma type to IDOE to receive diploma seals. Counts must be submitted [here](#) by Friday, March 13. Review this [memo](#) for more information and instructions. Additional details on printing the new enrollment, employment, and enlistment and service seals will be shared soon. Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Pathways and Opportunities](#) with additional questions.

Office of School Support and Transformation

REMINDER: Annual 1003 Flexibility Waivers
IDOE's Office of School Support and Transformation is [accepting applications](#) for 1003 Flexibility Waivers to support improved student outcomes, operational efficiency, and innovative learning. Details are available in the [memo](#) and [Flexibility Guide for Indiana's K-12 Schools](#). Applications are open on a rolling basis through Friday, April 24, and will be considered at SB0E meetings through July. Contact [Georgia Watson](mailto:Georgia.Watson@doe.in.gov) with any questions.

Office of Student, School, and Family Engagement

REMINDER: Public Comment Open on Indiana's Employability Skills Standards
Indiana's Employability Skills Standards are designed to help students build the most in-demand skills for current and future careers. IDOE is currently seeking public feedback on updates to the Indiana Employability Skills Standards for the 2026-2027 school year. The updated standards are arranged within the domains and skills of Communication, Collaboration, and Work Ethic, which aligns with the Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed characteristics, as well as the new Indiana diploma and readiness seals. Click [here](#) to review the updated standards and provide feedback by 11:45 p.m. ET on Friday, March 13. IDOE will use this input to refine standards and present final recommendations to the Indiana State Board of Education later this year.

Office of Special Education, English Learning, and Migrant Education

NEW: Early Childhood Special Education Directory
In response to requests from educators and school leaders, we are creating an Early Childhood Special Education Directory. To be part of this directory, local education agencies (LEAs) are invited to complete [this voluntary form](#). Once this directory information is gathered, a searchable format will be created and posted to the Office of Special Education Moodle to assist LEAs in connecting with colleagues around the state about topics of interest in early childhood special education.

NEW: Spread the Word - Preparation for First Steps Transition
IDOE has created the following joint guidance with the Family and Social Services Administration (FSSA) - [Spread the Word: Preparation for First Steps Transition](#). This document seeks to add clarity about the difference between the First Steps requirement for transition planning meetings and the joint First Steps/LEA requirement for transition conferences. There are no new requirements or changes to requirements in this guidance. LEAs can contact IDOE's [Office of Special Education](#) or FSSA's [Bureau of Child Development Services](#) with any questions.

NEW: Aspiring Special Education Leadership Institute Cohort Seven
The Indiana Council of Administrators of Special Education (ICASÉ) offers a one-year leadership development program designed to prepare educators for special education leadership roles to improve outcomes for all students. The Aspiring Special Education Leadership Institute (ASELI) for cohort seven. Applicants [accepting applications](#) for cohort seven. ASELI is composed of teachers, school psychologists, counselors, and principals who aspire to be special education administrators and are committed to a career in special education leadership. ASELI is not available for currently licensed special education directors. For questions, contact specialeducation@doe.in.gov.

REMINDER: Part B Office Hours - Year Five Fiscal Year 2026 Maintenance of Effort
IDOE's Office of Special Education will hold a Maintenance of Effort (MOE) Office Hours to provide technical assistance and answer specific MOE-related questions. The MOE process demonstrates LEA compliance with the IDEA Part B requirement to maintain year-to-year state/local funding for special education programming. Each LEA must complete the MOE workbook, even if it is a member of a special education consortium. Because completion of this workbook requires coordination, LEA special education and business office staff are both encouraged to attend these office hours. Please use the links below to join:

- [Wednesday, February 25, from 1 to 2 p.m. ET](#)
- [Monday, March 2, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET](#)

REMINDER: Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 611 and 619 Final Reports
Any FY 2024 final reports that have not been submitted for 611 and 619 are now past due. Please submit these reports via email at partbgrants@doe.in.gov by Friday, February 27.

Office of Title Grants and Support

NEW: Federal Programs Quarterly Meeting
Join IDOE's Title Grants and Support Team at our next quarterly meeting from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Thursday, March 5. At this meeting, we will share information regarding federal program updates. 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. We will not host a February Coffee Chat. Contact Title@doe.in.gov with any questions.

REMINDER: Update on Indiana's Federal Waiver Request
In October 2025, IDOE requested a federal waiver for flexibility under the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). This kicked off a collaborative process between IDOE and the U.S. Department of Education (USED) to reduce red tape, strengthen accountability, increase support for vulnerable students, and allow Indiana educators to continue building on our strong momentum.

We have had excellent, productive conversations with USED and look forward to continuing our progress ahead. In order to work through some final details, we asked USED for a brief and temporary pause in their review. Our goal is still to share new flexibilities ahead of the 2026-2027 school year.

Office of Educational Options and Quality

NEW: Learn More About Career Scholarship Accounts and Education Scholarship Accounts Ahead of the Sunday, March 1, Application Window
The application window for the Career Scholarship Account (CSA) and Education Scholarship Account (ESA) programs will open on Sunday, March 1. This is the first year that the CSA and ESA programs will be administered by IDOE. Eligible expenses and other processes will remain the same for the 2026-2027 school year. For more information, including our updated handbooks and frequently asked questions, please visit our webpages by clicking [here](#).

NEW: 2026-2027 Choice Scholarship Program School Application
The 2026-2027 application for schools to participate in the Indiana Choice Scholarship Program is officially open! The application is accessible online through the LINK portal. To access the school application tile, you must be assigned as a School Administrator, Principal, or Superintendent. The principal principal must be logged into the [LINK portal](#) to submit the school application. Contact ChoiceSchool@doe.in.gov with any questions.

NEW: 2026-2027 Final Student Award Letters Now Available
The 2026-2027 Final Student Award Letters are now available to download from the Choice application. To avoid timeouts, schools are encouraged to batch download the letters. Contact ChoiceSchool@doe.in.gov with any questions.

REMINDER: Period 2 Endorsement Forms
Period 2 Endorsement Forms are now available for download and upload. A signed form is required for every Period 2 Choice Scholarship student. The upload window will be open through Friday, February 27. Contact ChoiceSchool@doe.in.gov with any questions.

REMINDER: Choice Membership Appeal Process
House Enrolled Act 1515-2025 allows a Choice parent, or a Choice school on behalf of a Choice parent, to petition IDOE to add a student to the school's Membership Report, if they believe the student should have been included. The process is the same as it was for fall membership. Please review this [memo](#) for details about the process and the petition form. The petition deadline will be posted when the Choice payment is made in March. Contact ChoiceSchool@doe.in.gov with any questions.

Indiana Commission for Higher Education

UPDATE: 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. A few clarifying updates have been made in the memo following its release on Friday, January 16. Contact IDOE's [Engagement Team](#) or the Indiana Commission for Higher Education's [CTE Team](#) with any questions.

News From Our Partners

NEW FROM NIMBLE: Upcoming Webinars - Recruitment and Hiring Best Practices
All Indiana schools and districts have access to professional learning focused on recruitment and hiring through IDOE's partnership with [Nimble](#). Registration is now open for three webinars taking place in March and April. Any school or district that is interested but unable to attend live is encouraged to register to receive the recording after each session.

- [More Than a Job Post: How to Attract Stronger Teaching Talent](#) - Wednesday, March 4, from 12 to 12:45 p.m. ET - [Register here](#).
- [Better Interviews, Better Hires](#) - Tuesday, March 24, from 12 to 12:45 p.m. ET - [Register here](#).
- [Keep Them Engaged: Candidate Communication that Works](#) - Thursday, April 23, from 4 to 4:45 p.m. ET - [Register here](#).

Schools and districts can also learn more about the free recruitment and hiring tools available through the Nimble/IDOE partnership [here](#).

NEW FROM THE INDIANA ASSOCIATION FOR EDUCATION OF YOUNG CHILDREN (INAEYC): 2026 Annual Conference, May 15-16
The INAEYC 2026 Annual Conference is scheduled for Friday, May 15, through Saturday, May 16, at the Indianapolis Convention Center. This unique conference is a professional learning opportunity for educators working in preschool through grade three settings. This two-day event brings together innovative teaching strategies, research-based practices, and hands-on learning experiences that directly support classroom instruction and child development. Teachers will gain practical tools they can immediately apply in early literacy and math, student wellbeing, play-based instruction, and classroom practices to support all learners. Registration is available [here](#). If you run into registration issues or need further accommodation, please email klackey@inaeyc.org.

UPDATE FROM BALL STATE UNIVERSITY'S CENTER FOR ECONOMIC AND CIVIC LEARNING: CREATE250 Civic Learning Opportunities for Indiana Educators
As Indiana prepares for America's 250th anniversary, Ball State University's Center for Economic and Civic Learning (CECL) invites teachers across Indiana schools to apply for CREATE250, a statewide civic education initiative. Two opportunities are now open:

- **CREATE250 Mentor Teachers:** Experienced educators serve as instructional leaders, mentor colleagues, and support inquiry-based civic learning. Participants receive a \$2,000 stipend, access to advanced professional learning, and eligibility for a statewide civic immersion experience in Washington, D.C., for selected participants. Apply [here](#).
- **CREATE250 Student Community of Practice:** Teachers collaborate with peers across Indiana, participate in sustained professional learning, attend a Summer Civic Learning Academy, and implement a CREATE250-aligned civic project with students. Participants receive a \$1,000 stipend and mentoring support. Apply [here](#).

Both opportunities are designed to be feasible alongside full-time teaching and support high-quality civic learning as part of America250. For additional information, contact CECL Director [Dr. David Roof](mailto:Dr.David.Roof).

REMINDER FROM INDIANA SPORTS CORP: Participate in the Indiana K-12 March Madness Bracket Challenge
Calling all Indiana K-12 teachers! Indiana Sports Corp. in partnership with the NCAA® is launching a statewide [Indiana March Madness Bracket Challenge](#) just for K-12 classrooms ahead of the 2026 Men's Final Four® in Indianapolis. Celebrate Indiana's basketball spirit by bringing this fun, free activity into your classroom and competing against other schools. Teachers are encouraged to integrate the bracket into existing lessons or use it to enhance curriculum-based activities. Schools with the top brackets in each grade group will earn statewide recognition and bragging rights, highlighted through local news and social media. [Register](#) your classroom today! Contact the [Indiana Sports Corp](#) with any questions.

Weekly Updates

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

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