



K-Nearly \$5 Million in Grants Awarded at Indiana Educational Excellence Awards Gala

Friday, September 6, 2024

INDIANAPOLIS - During the third annual Indiana Educational Excellence Awards Gala, the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) awarded nearly \$5 million to schools and educators across the state. This black-tie event is focused on celebrating and elevating the work of Indiana's educators as they support student learning.

"The Educational Excellence Awards Gala is a celebration of the extraordinary impact our educators have on students and communities across Indiana," said Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education. "We know that continuous improvement is part of our journey, yet tonight is about pausing to shine a spotlight on the incredible successes happening in our schools. These educators are more than just teachers—they're mentors, leaders and pillars in their communities who have touched countless lives over the years. They deserve to be celebrated like the stars they are, and this event is one way for us to say thank you for the immense difference they make every single day. Their dedication and passion are shaping the future of Indiana, and we are incredibly proud to honor them tonight."

The gala, which was hosted in Indianapolis on Friday, September 6, brought together nearly 550 educators and guests from across the state. The event recognized the 2024 Indiana Teacher of the Year, Indiana's 2023 Milken Educator Award recipients and other dedicated educators from across the state. The event also recognized schools that are excelling in key areas such as literacy (science of reading), STEM and rethinking high school.

The largest award of the evening, *Excellence in Next Level Educational Experiences and Opportunities*, recognizes the school or district making significant strides in preparing students for their future, which includes focusing on literacy, STEM and college and career readiness.

IDOE also awarded districts with up to \$250,000 for excellence in areas including early literacy, STEM, student pathways, college readiness, community collaboration and educator professional development. The size of each financial award is proportional to the respective school or district's total student population. Awards must be used to sustain and expand the school's current, impactful programming, to support teachers who lead this work, as well as to mentor other schools to drive additional, innovative strategies through a community of practice.



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

Additionally, 10 outstanding educators were awarded with \$2,500 each for their commitment to areas such as professional growth, use of technology in the classroom and cultivating community partnerships.

2024 Indiana Educational Excellence Awards Gala school/district awardees include:

Excellence in STEM Award

Carlisle Middle School, Southwest School Corporation \$21,450

Indian Creek Elementary, MSD Lawrence Township \$186,725

Sullivan Middle School, Southwest School Corporation \$97,625

This award recognizes schools that have expanded access to high-quality STEM learning opportunities for all students.

Excellence in Leading and Learning Award

Heritage Elementary School, East Allen County Schools \$35,785

Paramount Brookside, Paramount Schools of Excellence \$229,075

Tippecanoe School Corporation \$223,173

This award recognizes schools that provide high-quality professional learning support for educators.

Excellence in Early Literacy Award

Grissom Elementary, Muncie Community Schools \$105,000

**Perry Central Elementary School, Perry Central Community School Corporation
\$179,025**

Union Elementary School, Franklin Community Schools \$41,804

This award recognizes schools that have established strategies and partnerships to support all students in the mastery of foundational reading skills, specifically.

Excellence in Student Pathways

Community School Corporation of Eastern Hancock County \$250,000

Providence Cristo Rey High School \$64,625

Whitley County Consolidated Schools \$250,000

This award recognizes schools that prioritize access to opportunities for work-based learning and apprenticeships.

Excellence in Community Collaboration



Career Academy South Bend \$250,000

Options Schools \$250,000

South Ripley Elementary School, South Ripley Community Schools \$80,000

This award recognizes schools that are maximizing support for students through strategic collaboration with local and state partners.

Excellence in Student-Centered Support

Brentwood Elementary School, Plainfield Community School Corporation \$75,000

Lawrence Central High School, MSD Lawrence Township \$250,000

MSD Washington Township \$195,922

This award recognizes schools that are expanding access to evidence-based supports in the areas of academics and student well-being.

Excellence in Academic Gains

Cathedral High School \$250,000

East Chicago Urban Enterprise Academy \$116,875

Grissom Middle School, Penn-Harris-Madison School Corporation \$177,000

This award recognizes schools that have made the most progress in improving achievement for all students. One or more of the following must be demonstrated by the award recipients: increased academic achievement for students as indicated by ILEARN English/language arts and mathematics assessment results, prioritization of initiatives focused on accelerating learning and/or implementation of progress monitoring and evidenced-based practices for students in need of extra support.

Excellence in College Readiness

Herron Classical Schools Network \$250,000

Randolph Central School Corporation \$250,000

Tell City Jr.-Sr. High School, Tell City-Troy Township School Corporation \$190,445

This award recognizes schools that have demonstrated a commitment to helping students earn a credential of value before graduating high school.

Excellence in Next Level Educational Experiences and Opportunities

Christel House Indianapolis \$250,000



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This award recognizes a school or district that is transformative in their holistic approach to prepare students for their future, including a focus on literacy, STEM and college and career readiness.

2024 Indiana Educational Excellence Awards Gala individual awardees include:

Promising Educator Excellence Award

Elise Anderson, Geist Montessori Academy

This award recognizes educators with one to five years of experience who proactively engage in professional development and seek out opportunities to learn from other educators.

Dedicated Educator Excellence Award

Lindsay Speiser, Southwest Allen County Schools

This award recognizes educators with six to 15 years of experience who proactively engage in professional development and seek out opportunities to mentor and learn from other educators.

Lifetime Educator Excellence Award

Deaneen Pashea, East Noble School Corporation

Ryan Rust, Plymouth Community School Corporation

This award recognizes educators with 16+ years of experience who demonstrate a commitment to their own professional growth, as well as contributing to the professional development of other educators.

Early Childhood Educator Excellence Award

Christina Parker, Hickory Center, Northwest Allen County Schools

This award recognizes early childhood educators with over three years of experience who demonstrate a commitment to supporting Indiana's youngest students in developing kindergarten readiness skills.

Digital Innovator Excellence Award

Shannon Quigley, Fort Wayne Community Schools



This award recognizes educators who leverage technology to improve student learning. This individual takes the initiative to learn how to use digital tools in the classroom and may support others in their implementation of technologies in the classroom.

English Learner Educator Excellence Award

Ali Fleischer, MSD Washington Township

This award recognizes educators with over three years of experience who serve students within their school's English Learning Program. This individual leads, teaches and builds community among all educators to ensure students are supported across settings.

Exceptional Learner Educator Excellence Award

Emily Weaver, Greenfield Central Community Schools

This award recognizes educators with over three years of experience who serve students within their school's Exceptional Learner Program. This individual leads, teaches and builds community among all educators to ensure students are supported across settings.

Collaborative Educator Excellence Award

Alex Axsom, Noblesville Schools

Jason Hawley, Randolph Eastern

This award recognizes educators with over three years of experience who maximize support for students through strategic collaboration with various partners. This individual engages in identifying needs and expanding students' access to future opportunities through the implementation of relevant partnerships.

Presenting sponsors for the event include the Institute for Quality Education, EdChoice and The Mind Trust. The event received additional financial support through premier sponsorships from the Richard M. Fairbanks Foundation and Ivy Tech Community College, as well as distinguished sponsorships from EES Innovation, the Indiana Association of School Principals, Marian University and Indiana Charter Innovation Center. Table sponsors include: Five Star Technology Solutions, the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents, the University of Indianapolis' Center for Excellence in Leadership of Learning, Sagamore Institute, Students First, Lilly Endowment and Glick Philanthropies. Other contributors include: Stand for Children Indiana, Teach for America, Project Lead the Way and CSO Architects.



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School awards are funded through the state's federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief grant. Individual educator awards are funded through the generous sponsorship of those listed above.

Photos from the Indiana Educational Excellence Awards Gala will be available [here](#). Additional photos, including group photos of award recipients, are available upon request.

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MEDIA CONTACT:

Molly Williams

Indiana Department of Education

mowilliams1@doe.in.gov

(317) 234-3880