



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

To: Joseph M. Habig, State Budget Agency
From: Dr. Katie Jenner, Indiana Secretary of Education
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INTRODUCTION

At the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE), our goal is to meet every child where they are and ensure they have access to the quality education they need to enjoy lifelong success. This includes approximately 1.13 million Hoosier students attending more than 2,200 schools.

Indiana's educators are working hard to prepare our students with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet future economic demands, while simultaneously the global economy continues to change and technology continues to rapidly advance. That's why our collective work to prepare students for life beyond high school is now more important than ever.

In order for every Hoosier student to reach their potential, we must work together to prioritize:

- Knowledge and skill development across all grade levels, and
- Access to college and career pathways and opportunities in high school.

By supporting students in finding their purpose, knowing their value, and understanding the possibilities for their life's path, we can ensure all students emerge prepared for a dynamic future, whether they choose employment, enrollment, or enlistment leading to service.

IDOE TEAM'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Upon our team's appointment at the beginning of 2021, we undertook a stakeholder engagement process to ensure our focus and priorities are aligned with what our students, educators, and communities need most. As a result, our team quickly identified the following non-negotiable principles that guide all of our work.

- **Student-Centered:** To have the most positive impact on student learning, we will keep students top of mind and make every decision based on the needs of individual learners.
- **Inclusive and Collaborative:** We are committed to activating communities by engaging partners throughout the state.
- **Champions of Educators:** Our educators are critical partners in our students' education journeys, and we will prioritize supporting them and elevating our profession.
- **Data- and Results-Driven:** We will rely on data and results to shape innovative solutions, guide decision-making, drive student learning, and measure the impact of public policy.
- **Transparent and Trustworthy:** We will make accurate data readily available to ensure public understanding.



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- **Future-Focused:** Since our rapidly changing economy will require continuous education for a growing number of Hoosiers, we will encourage increased innovation within our education to workforce continuum to meet the needs of an uncertain future economy.

THREE PILLARS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

IDOE's important work requires everyone working together at the state, community, school, and family level. As we have worked collaboratively towards solutions, we have heard a number of topical themes on repeat, which focus our collective work into three pillars and are once again reflected in our 2026-2027 budget requests. To support these pillars, through the stakeholder engagement process, the following strategic priorities have been identified:

Pillar 1 - Student Learning and Opportunity: *Deliver Quality, Purposeful Educational Opportunities for Each Student*

- Expand and support quality, affordable, and accessible learning opportunities, including early learning options
- Implement literacy and STEM initiatives to strengthen the capacity to deliver the educational fundamentals to every child by grade 10 (age 16) and improve student outcomes
- Support schools and communities as they strengthen, expand, and create connections to college and career pathways and opportunities leading to employment, enrollment, or enlistment leading to service
- Expand access to, training for, and use of technology options that support expanded contexts for learning
- Create capacity and flexibility to drive effective learning-focused innovation in all aspects of K-12 education, which includes additional opportunities for students to engage in project-, work- and service-based learning
- Launch the Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed (Indiana GPS) dashboard, which re-envision how educational progress is measured and tailored to individual students

Pillar 2 - Educator Talent, Quality and Value: *Elevate and Support Indiana's Educators*

- Forge strategic partnerships to elevate the mission and value of Indiana's K-12 educators by creating recognition opportunities to celebrate the impact of educators
- Double down on local strategies, such as "Grow Your Own" programs, to expand the pipeline of talented teachers to serve in the classroom and in leadership roles, including racially and ethnically diverse candidates and candidates for high-need subject areas
- Improve access to effective professional and leadership development, and create networks and other capacity for sharing information, practices, and ideas with/among educators through solutions such as the Indiana Learning Lab
- Improve guidance, support, and accessible data, for those recruiting, educating, and mentoring rising educators, including developing a real-time supply and demand marketplace for the educator pipeline



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Pillar 3 - System-Alignment and Capacity: Increase Partnerships and Deliver Aligned, Effective, and Efficient Support

- Reduce unnecessary bureaucracy and barriers to innovation, while also streamlining data reporting processes for schools
- Collaborate with educators and other stakeholders to align available state data and fiscal resources to ensure the greatest possible return on investment and impact for student learning
- Increase support for local capacity-building to improve results, including incentivizing communities to promote collaboration amongst K-12 schools, community organizations, higher education, and workforce partners
- Assist local educators in solution-finding for real-time issues (e.g., accelerated learning, hybrid instruction, transitions to post-K-12 activity)
- Partner with stakeholders to ensure Indiana's strategic vision for education is supported and implemented

RECENTLY DEPLOYED TACTICS ALIGNED TO PILLARS

Since 2021, the Indiana Department of Education, in partnership with Governor Holcomb and the Indiana General Assembly, has worked to transform K-12 education through numerous high-impact tactics. To inform these tactics, IDOE has also worked closely with stakeholders across the state, including educators, parents and families, students, higher education, business and industry, as well other community leaders.

- **Secured a historic literacy investment (\$170 million), focused on science of reading.** This investment allowed IDOE to deploy a number of comprehensive, strategic solutions aimed at urgently helping more students learn to read. Below are just a few examples of this work:
 - **Indiana Literacy Cadre:** Provides early elementary teachers with embedded instructional coaching and support aligned with science of reading practices.
 - Cohort 1 (2022): 41 schools | Through Cohort 2 (2023): 199 schools
 - Through Cohort 3 (2024): 489 schools | Goal: 600 schools (60%) through Cohort 4 (2025)
 - **Indiana Learns:** Provides \$1,000 grants towards learning support and tutoring services to students and families, regardless of their ability to pay.
 - Over 20,000 students have enrolled, and nearly 180,000 hours of tutoring have been provided.
 - **Indiana Learning Lab:** One-stop-shop providing educators and families with instructional resources, professional development opportunities, and other best practices.
 - Saw an increase of over 69,000 users in two years (6,000 users in 2021, over 75,000 today).
 - **IREAD at Second Grade:** Provides access to an early “On Track indicator” for parents/families and teachers to determine if students will master foundational reading skills by the end of third grade.



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- School Participation: 385 in spring 2022; 771 in spring 2023; and 1,076 for spring 2024.
- **Science of Reading Modules:** Online modules were developed to provide additional science of reading training.
 - Over 6,300 educators have completed this training, earning 25 Professional Growth Plan (PGP) points. Eligible educators also received a \$1,200 stipend upon completion.
- **Rethinking high school to ensure greater flexibility and seamless transitions post-graduation.**

During the 2024 legislative session, Indiana sunset current graduation requirements, allowing IDEOE and SBOE to develop a more innovative, future-focused approach to prepare our students for employment, enrollment, or enlistment leading to service.

 - The three areas of focus consist of increasing flexibility in diploma requirements, while maintaining rigor, increasing access to high-quality work-based learning, and increasing access to credentials of value before high school graduation.
- **Developed the Profile of a Graduate using five key characteristics that represent an Indiana Graduate Prepared to Succeed (GPS).**

Characteristics include academic mastery; career and postsecondary readiness - credentials and experiences; communication and collaboration; work ethic; and civic, financial, and digital literacy.
- **Re-envisioning how we measure school and student performance through Indiana GPS.**

This dashboard, launched one and a half years ahead of the statutorily-required deadline, provides students and stakeholders with learner-centered, future-focused data that displays how our students are building the necessary knowledge and skills for success.

 - Indiana GPS has been highlighted nationally on multiple occasions and earned a national award in 2023 for educational leadership and impact.
- **Incentivized the work that truly moves the needle for students.**
 - Literacy Achievement Grants: Awards cash stipends to teachers, instructional coaches, and other school staff who are responsible for the implementation and delivery of early literacy and reading instruction.
 - Academic Performance Grants: Provides schools with incentive funding for students earning an associate degree, credential of value, or the Indiana College Core.
- **Expanded learning options for Hoosier students and families.**
 - Worked with the Indiana General Assembly and Governor Holcomb to increase K-12 education funding by approximately \$1.8 billion from FY 2019 to FY 2025, supporting all school types, including traditional public, charter, and non-public schools.



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- Implemented the largest expansion of Choice Scholarship eligibility in state history, removing financial barriers to students accessing quality educational opportunities that better meet their interests.
 - The Choice Scholarship had approximately 43,000 recipients in fall of 2021, and approximately 69,000 recipients in fall of 2023.
- Provided implementation support for the creation of Indiana's Education Scholarship Account (ESA) program, which empowers students with disabilities to tailor their education experience to their unique needs.
- Implemented the first-in-the-nation Career Scholarship Accounts (CSAs) program designed to support the completion of credentials of value and quality work-based learning experiences, including modern youth apprenticeships.

- **Redesigning school accountability.**
Indiana GPS provides a platform for school performance reports, as well as other features that benefit educators, parents and families, and community leaders. Per statute, IDOE will provide the General Assembly with future accountability recommendations by December 1, 2024.
- **Streamlined Indiana Academic Standards by more than 25%.**
In order to ensure students are honing in on essential content, IDOE brought together content-area experts, educators, as well as parents and families to review the current standards and determine appropriate, optimal streamlining.
- **Redesigning Indiana's largest assessment as a through-year vs. summative model.**
The ILEARN through-year assessment will include three checkpoints and a shortened summative assessment at the end of the year, providing targeted interventions for students who are working toward key subject area milestones.
 - Over 1,340 schools have opted in to pilot the summative assessment in the 2024-2025 school year.
- **Created a comprehensive teacher supply and demand marketplace.**
This free tool tracks vacancies, matches teachers with open positions, and helps recruit new teachers.
 - To date, the majority of school corporations and charter schools have opted-in to use the full marketplace.
- **Created I-SEAL (special education), I-TELL (English learner), and I-STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) to address teacher shortages in high-need areas of expertise.**
 - I-SEAL streamlines the required coursework for teachers to earn full special education licensure. The program provides financial assistance and scholarships to educators while they complete the coursework.



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- Over 1,100 participants are currently enrolled, and nearly 600 have completed the program.
- I-TELL funds tuition, books, and material fees for current educators/bachelor's degree holders to complete coursework leading to English as a New Language (ENL) licensure.
 - Nearly 300 participants are currently enrolled, and over 200 have completed the program.
- I-STEM provides free tuition and books to eligible candidates for STEM areas. Additional stipends are also available to incentivize employment in rural districts.
 - Over 1,100 participants are currently enrolled, and over 375 have completed the program.

IDOE is committed to partnering with Indiana's schools and educators to support our students in their journeys to success. The Department is well-positioned to continue the positive momentum built over the past four years, and we look forward to continuing to work together, ensuring our state and the educational opportunities that exist are stronger and better than ever. By capitalizing on the alignment amongst IDOE, other state agency partners, lawmakers, and external stakeholders, we have an opportunity to positively impact the trajectory of the lives of countless Indiana students. Thank you for your consideration and support.