

MINUTES
Indiana State Board of Education
Business Meeting

October 15, 2025
9:00 A.M. E.D.T.

Authors' Room
Indiana State Library
315 W. Ohio Street
Indianapolis, IN 46202

https://www.youtube.com/live/T0Jgfo_BhXg

Board Members Present: Dr. Katie Jenner, Chair, Ms. Katie Mote, Vice Chair, Mr. William Durham Jr., Secretary, Mr. Scott Bess, Ms. Erika Dilosa, Dr. Byron Ernest, Ms. Iris Hammel, Mr. Greg Gastineau, Ms. Kristin Rentschler, and Mr. B.J. Watts.

Board Members Absent: Mr. Pat Mapes.

- I. **Call to Order:**
 - A. Roll Call: A quorum is present.
 - B. Pledge of Allegiance.
- II. **Approval of Agenda:** The agenda was approved by unanimous vote.
- III. **Approval of the Minutes:** The Minutes, for the September 10, 2025, meeting, were approved by unanimous vote.
 - A. September 10, 2025 - [Memo](#)
- IV. **Statement from the Chair:** Dr. Jenner began the meeting by mentioning how October is National Principals Month and commended the principals across the state of Indiana for their hard work. Additionally, the Indiana Department of Education named its 2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year, Megan Johnson. Megan Johnson is a fourth-grade teacher at Central Elementary in Plainfield.

Dr. Jenner also described how Taylor University and Heritage Christian School built a credential pipeline that supports students on track to attend Taylor University after high school. Taylor University went on to recruit several other faith-based higher education institutions (Anderson University, Bethel University, Grace College, Huntington University, and Indiana Wesleyan University) to partner with their local high schools to streamline and strengthen the higher education pipeline.
- V. **Board Member Comments and Reports:** None.
- VI. **Public Comment:** Cindy Long, Indiana Association of School Principals (IASP), thanked Dr. Jenner and the DOE team for allowing IASP to be part of the accountability conversation. IASP was pleased to see grade twelve shifting towards diploma seals and away from the SAT. IASP also appreciated the progress on the success indicators and would like to have a continued

discussion on the attendance component. IASP looks forward to working within the second draft framework to make the rule work for all Indiana schools.

- VII. **Consent Agenda:** The consent agenda was approved by unanimous vote. Mr. Watts recused himself from Item B.

- A. East Gibson School Corporation Governing Body Change – [Memo](#)
- B. Common School Loan Amendment – [Memo](#)
- C. Common School Fund Policy Updates - [Memo](#)
- D. Summer School Reading Reimbursement – [Memo](#)

- VIII. **New Business:** Ron Sandlin, IDOE, Chief Innovation Officer, presented updates on the second draft of the school accountability rule.

- A. Accountability Rule Update – [Presentation](#)
 - i. Mr. Sandlin began the presentation by thanking and commending the DOE team members responsible for drafting the school accountability rule and moving it through the rulemaking process. He also thanked DOE's partners outside of state government who have provided critical feedback throughout the rulemaking process. Mr. Sandlin mentioned that he is merely a representative of a strong coalition driving innovative public policy for students across Indiana.
 - ii. Mr. Sandlin discussed the overall goal and vision of the new accountability model – to develop a model that values all the characteristics essential to students' success, as well as every student's unique pathway. He discussed how accountability models are a cornerstone to a much larger educational vision and initiative.
 - iii. Mr. Sandlin explained how the accountability vision is deeply informed by partnerships with educators, students, parents, community leaders, industry partners, and external stakeholders. Hoosiers consistently agree that academic mastery, career and postsecondary readiness, communication, work ethic, and civic/financial/digital literacy are most important to a student's lifelong success. This vision continues to serve as a foundation for multiple education policies in Indiana.
 - iv. The other key component of Indiana's model are critical building blocks along a student's K-12 education. These research-based success indicators indicate a connection between a student's education career and post-secondary opportunities. The department has used this data to map students' post-secondary outcomes in enrollment, employment, and enlistment. The proposed accountability model intentionally aligns with these success indicators. Some of these indicators have existed for decades (traditional standardized test scores, etc.), but others are more novel and require continued research and development.
 - v. Dr. Jenner discussed how there is a balance between academic mastery indicators and other success indicators. Indiana is trying to understand and create a model that is inclusive of academic mastery and skill development. Assessment and accountability really matter in Indiana.
 - vi. Mr. Sandlin described how Indiana is partnering with Carnegie and ETS to pilot innovative ways to measure communication and collaboration skills. Indiana is also committed to partnering with other external stakeholders to ensure that the model is accompanied by supportive resources. This assists schools in leveraging proposals or policies that focus on and maximize outcomes for every single student.

- vii. Mr. Sandlin reiterated that per Indiana statute, IDOE must develop a proposal for a revised school performance designation utilizing an A-F grading scale that is based on data contained in Indiana GPS by December 31, 2025. With that directive from the Indiana General Assembly, DOE selected four design priorities for the accountability model: transparency, academic and skills focused, student-centered, and data-driven.
- viii. Mr. Sandlin described that an N size of one really allows Indiana to focus on the individual student. When aggregating data, it is easy to lose sight of individuals students and focus on schools as a whole. Dr. Jenner explained how an N size of one allows schools to keep their eyes focused on each individual student and see their progression throughout their educational career.
- ix. Mr. Sandlin reiterated how the interaction of indicators at the individual student level matters more than the interaction of aggregate indicators across school corporations and school levels.
- x. Mr. Sandlin discussed how there was a thirty-day public comment period for individuals to voice their feedback on the new accountability rule. The department developed an intake form that generated 425 unique comments from the public. The public comment period highlighted three themes:
 - a) Broad support for elevating a variety of knowledge, skills, & experiences that contribute to a student's future success (including additional indicators aligned to specific pathways)
 - b) The importance of prioritizing proficiency while encouraging improvement for all students through academic growth & skill development
 - c) The need for a transparent & simple accountability model that is meaningful to parents/families and provides schools with a clear roadmap for continuous improvement
- xi. In addition to public comments, the department held multiple meetings with stakeholder groups and built a coalition of principles, advocates, higher education representatives, and others to refine the new model.
- xii. Mr. Sandlin explained how the key areas of focus for the accountability model have not changed for the benchmarks throughout K-12 education, but the language has shifted to include a wider and more comprehensive snapshot into the student's progress.
- xiii. Mr. Sandlin described how the key aspect of balancing academic mastery with additional knowledge, skills, and experiences has remained intact, as well. Given the broad support for the model's overall design and philosophy, the second draft maintains the idea of a universal expectation of academic master with additional educational experiences and skills. This model is unique in that it focuses on the success of each individual student.
- xiv. Mr. Sandlin discussed how the public generated feedback on the overall grading scale. The initial model had a traditional grading scale that is maintained in the second draft. After comprehensive review and running different iterations of the potential grade distribution, the recommendation concludes that this scale is a feature. For students to earn a zero in this proposed model, they must be completely disengaged from their educational experience. With this menu-based approach, schools have multiple options to engage with students and help them progress. The model will capture this. This scale emphasizes that if a student is generating zero points, then that is where the investment of resources needs to go. That is an important and practical feature of the new accountability model.

- xv. Mr. Sandlin discussed some of the key changes in the second draft of the accountability model.
- a) Feedback illustrated that while some aspects of the proposed new accountability model are simpler than the current model, additional simplicity is needed, particularly in the points system, to ensure the model is accessible and transparent for all Hoosiers. To bring more consistency to the value of each additional success indicator and increase the simplicity of the model for both schools and families, point values were updated at each milestone. This also better aligns point values with desired student outcomes.
 - b) Feedback also described how the state of Indiana has recently placed a strong emphasis on ensuring its youngest students receive the support they need to become proficient readers. The accountability model should reflect this priority and incentivize ongoing, targeted intervention and support for those struggling to read. To maintain Indiana's urgency in helping more students learn to read, a new Accelerated Literacy success indicator was created specifically for students who are identified as At-Risk on IREAD at grade 2 and later pass in grade 3.
 - c) Additionally, feedback explained how the state of Indiana has recently doubled down on its commitment to supporting students in becoming proficient readers, beyond grade 3. The accountability model should reflect this priority and incentivize ongoing, targeted intervention and support. To maintain the state's urgency in helping more students learn to read, a new Adolescent Reading Proficiency success indicator was created specifically for students who do not pass IREAD in grade 3 and later pass in grades 4-6.
 - d) Feedback also illustrated that it often varies across the state when students take certain courses. For example, at some schools, Biology is offered to students in grade 12, rather than grade 9. A potential unintended consequence of the first draft rule would require some schools to shift their schedule to offer Biology earlier to receive points. To ensure high schools have the flexibility to offer Biology in any grade and receive points for a student who passes, the Biology ECA assessment was added as a success indicator in grade 12, in addition to grade 10. This better reflects the indicator's intent, which is for students to demonstrate proficiency in Biology content before graduation, regardless of when they take the course.
 - e) Another key part of the proposed new accountability model is encouraging schools to focus on improvement for all students at all levels of academic mastery. Once a student has been identified as off track in grade 9, schools should be incentivized to get that student back on track. These continued supports will help ensure that all students have the best shot at success. To encourage schools to continue supporting students who are off track in grade 9, a Back On Track success indicator was added in grade 10 to ensure continued focus on accelerating credit attainment.
 - f) Feedback also described how partners identified specific recipes for success based on a student's unique future goals to develop the new diploma and readiness seals. The seals are based on key metrics that

directly correlate to long-term success in college, career, and/or enlistment and service. These recipes for success should be elevated more based on their currency and value for students. The second draft's solution is to ensure the accountability model aligns to the new diploma requirements by elevating the readiness seals as the key outcome in grade 12. A college entrance exam will also be a part of the model.

- g) Another piece of feedback was as schools work towards implementation of the new Indiana diploma and readiness seals, schools that do not opt in prior to the class of 2029 should also be incorporated into the model. To better align with the implementation timeline of the new Indiana diploma and readiness seals, the existing suite of Core 40 diplomas have been incorporated into the model for graduating cohorts up to 2028.
- xvi. Mr. Sandlin concluded the presentation by giving several hypothetical student examples to emphasize the merits of the proposed model. The examples reiterated the idea that the new model focuses on the strengths of each student as opposed to measuring each student based on a singular definition of success.
- xvii. Dr. Jenner reiterated that the at or above proficiency value is going to be higher than the approaching proficiency number. Dr. Jenner also explained how there are multiple assessment measures to capture a comprehensive view of how this is realistically executed at the school level.
- xviii. Dr. Ernest asked Mr. Sandlin to discuss the Biology ECA and attendance indicator in greater detail. Mr. Sandlin discussed how the model takes a comprehensive view of success indicators. Hypothetically, for the old accountability model, if a student did not pass the SAT ELA, the school's grade would decline. Under the old model, the school would be negatively impacted by each student that did not pass. It is an N over X model where the number of students who passed is divided by the number of students who took the exam. The new model looks at N individually, not in relation to other students. Under the new model, if a student did not pass the ELA portion of the SAT but achieved the Biology ECA and school attendance indicator, the school's grade will not diminish. The only way a school's grade will diminish is if a student does not demonstrate any indicators of success, not if a student does not indicate every indicator of success. Dr. Ernest reiterated that the new data and model begins to tell a story of student success. However, Dr. Ernest would like for the Biology ECA to only be taken once.
- xix. Ms. Dilosa commended the model for focusing on and emphasizing student successes. The new model encourages schools to earn points for the positive factors they already incorporate into their educational instruction. Ms. Dilosa explained how the new model is not punitive, but it creates opportunities for students who many have been overlooked in the past.
- xx. Mr. Bess explained how some pushbacks have come from individuals who believe the new accountability model lowers the academic standards for students in Indiana because there is less emphasis on test scores. Mr. Bess encouraged the board and the State to remain committed to the new model because it reflects the success of each individual student and does not lower the standards for educational attainment.
- xxi. Dr. Jenner explained how assessment is interwoven in this model but reiterated that there is a full human picture and that individuals are more than a test score. Indiana believes that there is more to a student than if they pass or fail an exam.

- xxii. Mr. Watts echoed Dr. Jenner's sentiment that the new model captures the different success indicators for each individual student. The new model recognizes that different students have different skills.
- xxiii. Ms. Rentschler described how even though accountability is not a student-facing program, it still continues to shift the conversations that educators have with students. This new model gives hope to students who struggle with test-taking and allows educators to emphasize to their students that the student is not just a test score.
- xxiv. Ms. Mote asked what kind of supports are offered for students who are approaching proficiency and described how the new model seems to use the same label (approaching proficiency) for different definitions. Ms. Mote explained how the language the new model uses does not indicate that students are on track to achieve proficiency. There is some dissonance that needs to be addressed moving forward.
- xxv. Mr. Sandlin described how students approaching proficiency will not achieve maximum points but make enough progress to eventually reach proficiency. Mr. Sandlin agreed with Ms. Mote that the new model needs to communicate that this is an incentive for schools to help students reach the next step to receive credit. The model is still designed to promote maximum achievement for every student.
- xxvi. Dr. Jenner explained how Indiana is trying to build a model with more elements that truly matter and offer a more comprehensive picture.
- xxvii. Mr. Bess discussed how the old model had negative implications for ninth grade coursework and credit attainment, but the new model encourages high school innovation and reinvention.
- xxviii. Ms. Hammel appreciates that the new model allows schools to be competency-based and earn points necessary to be on par with traditional schools that are also doing great work.
- xxix. The second 30-day public comment period began on October 15th and will continue until November 17th.
- xxx. The public hearing for comments on the new iteration of the model is scheduled for November 17th, 20025 at 11:00 a.m. in the Indiana State Library History Reference Room.
- xxxi. During the December 10th board meeting, the State will adopt the final version of the accountability rule after incorporating public feedback.

IX. **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned by unanimous vote.