

# Indiana State Board of Education School Accountability Framework



Indiana State Board of Education (“Board”) staff have been meeting with stakeholders to explore how to improve Indiana’s current accountability system. The final framework presented in this document is informed by this stakeholder input, existing state and federal accountability models, and research on best practices in school accountability. This process began with substantive conversations about the purpose of school accountability and the values stakeholders expect it to promote. The following information reflects the conclusions drawn from that input and serves as a foundation for the concepts presented on the subsequent pages.

## Purpose of Accountability Model

- Provide transparent and easily understood information on school quality to families and community stakeholders by issuing a summative performance rating
- Report high level, comparable, statewide, summative performance data to inform state and local policy, including the distribution of finite resources
- Safeguard the civil rights of marginalized students who have historically not received an equitable educational opportunity in the United States
- Capture a school’s and school system’s impact on student achievement and growth towards college and career readiness

## Underlying Values

### Equity & Excellence

***All students are entitled to a high-quality education that equips them with the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for postsecondary success.***

- Acknowledge the historic inequities that persist within K-12 education based on race and socio-economic status and the impact these inequities have on postsecondary success
- Inform the distribution of resources so that additional support is targeted towards schools where achievement gaps are most prevalent

### Local Flexibility & Agency

***Local school systems are best equipped to design and implement educational programs and ensure all students obtain the fundamental knowledge and skills necessary for postsecondary success.***

- Limit the number of high-stakes indicators to allow for maximum flexibility and promote multiple paths to achieve the state’s expectations for all students
- Provide aggregate feedback at the school level that allows local leaders and families to monitor the effectiveness of educational programming in their community

### College & Career Continuum

***Indiana’s accountability model should promote multiple opportunities that contribute to postsecondary success in addition to mastery of grade-level standards.***

- Include multiple measures of success that reflect outcomes throughout a student’s K-12 career to monitor progress towards postsecondary readiness
- Balance indicators based on research and longitudinal data to ensure the overall performance rating accurately reflects a school’s ability to prepare students for postsecondary success



# GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

## COMMITMENT TO SUMMATIVE RATING

Indiana should maintain its commitment to assigning an A through F summative performance rating to schools across the state, as is required by state law. Issuing a fair and transparent summative rating ensures communities can quickly assess school performance and establishes effective incentives for schools.

The next iteration of Indiana’s school accountability model should assign schools a summative rating in the form of an A through F letter grade based on valid and reliable indicators that measure student learning outcomes. Indiana’s commitment to assigning a summative school performance rating began with the passing of Public Law 221 in 1999. Since 2012, Indiana law has required A through F letter grades for summative performance ratings based on student performance, student growth, and additional multiple measures (high school only).

Some stakeholders advocate incorporating myriad non-academic indicators to “capture the complexity of school performance.” Education is certainly complex, but these complexities can be captured in other ways that complement the overall summative rating, as opposed to assigning stakes to non-academic indicators which may present numerous policy issues or technical implementation challenges.

### ANALYZING HISTORICAL LONGITUDINAL DATA

*Indiana State Board of Education staff engaged the Indiana Management Performance Hub to conduct longitudinal analyses of performance data to evaluate the significance of some indicators relative to long-term student success, including postsecondary outcomes.*

- ✓ *The impact of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy on long-term student achievement*
- ✓ *The impact of student performance on first attempt of 10<sup>th</sup> grade assessment on graduation and post-secondary attainment*
- ✓ *The actual weight of proficiency and growth across the state given bonus points in the growth table*

The Board should consider the following when determining indicators to be included in the calculation of a summative rating:<sup>i</sup>

- Is the indicator valid, reliable, and directly related to improved student achievement?
- Does the indicator differentiate among schools?
- What perverse incentives might result from including the indicator?
- Does the indicator measure something the school can influence?
- Will adding the indicator dilute the emphasis on student outcome measures?
- Is the indicator applicable and valuable to all students, schools, and communities?
- Is the indicator aligned to the overall policy goals of the state’s education system?



## STUDENT PERFORMANCE DASHBOARD

Indiana should develop a student performance dashboard to complement the summative performance rating. The dashboard should include indicators of student success that can be used to inform school improvement efforts and long-term postsecondary outcomes which measure student success beyond high school.

Indiana should provide families and communities a performance dashboard that incorporates indicators of student success in addition to a prominently displayed summative indicator of school performance. This approach will allow Indiana to maintain its commitment to a transparent and understandable accountability system, while simultaneously equipping stakeholders with information needed to inform student-centered decisions.

Hoosier educators desire actionable data to help them improve student outcomes. Unfortunately, many educators feel Indiana's current approach to school accountability does not equip them with the information they need to be successful. Some stakeholders suggest that Indiana should replace the summative rating with a performance dashboard that includes myriad school performance indicators. However, summative ratings and performance dashboards are complementary tools, not distinct choices. The current accountability model, more specifically the summative rating, is designed to illustrate the effectiveness of the system clearly and succinctly. The breadth of indicators included in the model are intentionally tailored to ensure the summative rating is transparent and accurately portrays the school's performance. That said, Indiana collects additional data from schools that are not included in the accountability model, and the state should invest in making that data useful and accessible for schools. Designing and distributing a performance dashboard that complements the school accountability model will empower educators with state-level information they can use in their classrooms along with the data already collected locally.

### K-8 Performance Dashboard

The K-8 performance dashboard should equip schools with early-warning information for students who are struggling to make expected academic progress. The Indiana Department of Education should work with educators and communities to review the latest research on social-emotional wellness, health and nutrition, and other factors that impact a student's likelihood for long-term academic success. Consideration should be given to the concept of a public-facing, school-level dashboard in addition to a confidential student-level dashboard available to educators and the parent/guardian of an individual student. A confidential dashboard may be necessary to ensure educators receive the actionable, student-level information they need while protecting the privacy of each student.

### 9-12 Performance Dashboard

The 2019 legislative accountability panel recommended a longitudinal dashboard be developed for each high school to highlight key performance indicators including student success after graduation.<sup>ii</sup> Many stakeholders agree the goal of a K-12 education is to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and competencies to lead a life of choice and opportunity. Developing a dashboard that includes student postsecondary attainment to complement the summative performance rating will allow schools and communities to consider student success beyond high school when determining how to support their current students.



## STATE & FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Indiana should design a state accountability system that reflects Hoosier values and strive to integrate the federally required model as much as possible. Schools and families deserve a single summative school performance rating that is transparent and easily understood.

Indiana should integrate the state and federal accountability systems as much as possible without sacrificing Hoosier values and priorities. Indiana currently operates two separate and distinct accountability models. The state A through F model has been in place since 2011 and was updated in 2015; the federal accountability model was developed in 2017 as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and has been amended by the Indiana Department of Education each year since. The two models use separate indicators or calculations for every metric, other than graduation. This lack of alignment and integration between the two models contributes to confusion and frustration as schools work to align their efforts to two sets of expectations. Communities also struggle to understand the performance of local schools in the midst of this confusion.

In developing the next model, the Board should prioritize Hoosier values and capitalize on areas of alignment with the federal requirements. If there are federal requirements that do not fit within the Board’s vision for school accountability, those indicators can be used in a complementary calculation that determines eligibility for additional resources and technical assistance. This integrated approach will allow Indiana to assign A through F letter grades based on Hoosier values and strategically target school improvement resources as is required in ESSA.

### Integrating State & Federal Accountability Models

This proposed accountability framework is designed to integrate the state and federal

models as much as possible without jeopardizing Hoosier values. This approach will be reflected in each subsequent section with a focus on:

1. Selecting the same metric and calculation for all academic indicators
2. Integrating measures of school quality and student success into the K-8 state model
3. Prioritizing Hoosier values over federal requirements when determining school letter grades
4. Required indicators not included in the state model will be used to determine eligibility for additional resources and technical assistance for school improvement purposes

### Every Student Succeeds Act Accountability Requirements

ESSA requires states to incorporate the following indicators in the federal accountability model:

**Elementary/Middle School:**

- ✓ Student Performance
- ✓ Student Progress (or Growth)
- ✓ School Quality & Student Success
- ✓ English Language Proficiency

**High School:**

- ✓ Student Performance
- ✓ Graduation
- ✓ School Quality & Student Success
- ✓ English Language Proficiency

States are not limited to these indicators and may include additional metrics in their federal model.



## K-8 ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

This section provides an overview of indicators that may be included in the next iteration of Indiana's accountability model for grades K-8. This framework reflects input from education stakeholders, a review of existing state and federal accountability models, and additional research and analysis related to best practices in school accountability. The framework should be viewed as a resource in the development of the next iteration of Indiana's accountability model, not a complete accountability model in and of itself.

### Key Considerations

The following themes emerged during stakeholder feedback and have significantly informed the framework outlined in this section:

#### Multiple Measures

Indiana should adopt additional student success indicators to complement student performance and growth on the ILEARN assessment. The current accountability model for K-8 schools relies on student proficiency and growth on the ILEARN assessment to calculate a summative performance rating. Adding student growth in 2011 strengthened the model; however, stakeholders expressed a need for additional indicators to accurately evaluate school quality. Adopting one or more multiple measures will also contribute to the integration of the state and federal systems, as ESSA requires a measure of school quality and student success at the K-8 level.

#### College & Career Continuum

All additional indicators in the K-8 model should demonstrate a direct research-based connection with successful postsecondary outcomes. While Indiana's academic standards are validated to meet postsecondary college and career expectations, meaning students who master the standards are on track to successfully enter the workforce or postsecondary education without remediation, additional indicators in the K-8 model should directly align to postsecondary success and reflect Indiana's goals around postsecondary attainment.

#### Student Mobility

Indiana should consider sophisticated approaches to calculate summative performance ratings that accommodate for the impact of student mobility. Schools serving highly mobile populations, where many students are enrolled for less than two consecutive years, should be measured based more on student progress or growth. Schools that serve largely stable populations, where many students are enrolled for three or more consecutive years, should be measured more on student performance.

#### Promoting Success for All

The current accountability system does not adequately incorporate measures of success for historically marginalized student subgroups. Increasing transparency and accountability for addressing achievement gaps between subgroups of students within a school, in addition to overall school performance, should be a priority in the next iteration of the accountability model. The Board should balance developing a summative rating that reflects the performance of all students with an effort to direct resources and support to ensure all students have access to an education that meets their needs.



**Key Concepts & Concrete Ideas**

This section includes concepts and concrete ideas for the Board to consider in the next iteration of Indiana’s K-8 accountability model.

The research-based proposals included in this section are informed by stakeholder feedback and are presented for the Board’s consideration when drafting an initial administrative rule. This section is not a formal recommendation for an accountability model. Each proposed indicator should be analyzed based on the general considerations outlined in the beginning of the framework before being included in the proposed rule.

**Adjust Weights Between Growth and Proficiency**

Indiana should revisit the weighting of student performance and student growth to promote proficiency for students consistently enrolled in the same school and prioritize growth for schools serving highly mobile students. Indiana’s growth to proficiency table establishes targets based on the academic progress required to achieve proficiency within three years. The current accountability model does nothing to account for growth across multiple years, which is required for many students to achieve proficiency.

**Revising Student Growth Points**

Indiana should consider revising the growth to proficiency table to cap student growth at 100 points. In 2017 and 2018 the median school growth score was 99 points. In other words, nearly half of Indiana schools earned 100 or more points for growth. Allowing schools to earn more than 100 points results in growth playing a greater role in the summative rating than intended. To address this issue, the Board may consider to doing one or more of the following:

- 1 Revise the Growth to Proficiency Table to reduce the maximum amount of points that can be earned
- 2 Cap total student growth points at 100 per subject (math and ELA) in the final calculation
- 3 Cap overall growth points at 100 in the final calculation

**Weighting Proficiency & Growth by Consecutive Years of Enrollment**

To account for student mobility, summative ratings for schools that serve a highly mobile student population should be weighted more towards student growth; however, a summative rating for a school that serves a stable student population should be weighted more towards performance.

One way to accomplish this is through dynamic weighting, where the weights for proficiency and growth are based on the average number of consecutive years each student has been enrolled.

**Mobility Weighting**

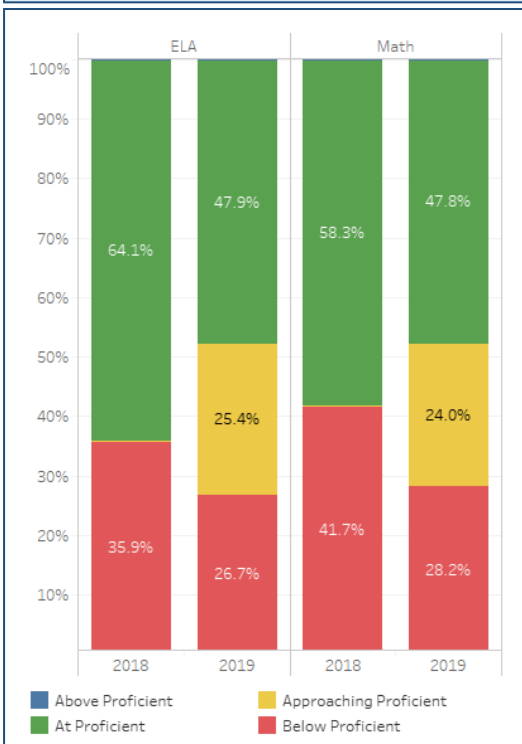
Consecutive Years Enrolled	Growth	Performance
1 Year	75%	25%
2 Consecutive Years	50%	50%
3+ Consecutive Years	25%	75%



**Measuring Student Performance**

Indiana should consider the benefit of using a performance index in place of the existing pass/fail, proficiency indicator. A performance index assigns a varying point value to each of the four achievement levels on the ILEARN assessments for math and English language arts. This calculation functions like Indiana’s current growth to proficiency table, where each student is assigned a point value based on the student’s achievement and the school receives an overall index rating based on the average of the point values. Indiana should maintain its commitment to transparency and continue reporting student proficiency rates, but evaluate schools using a more sophisticated performance indicator.

**2018 ISTEP+ Performance v. 2019 ILEARN Performance**



Shifts in academic standards and state assessments have resulted in drops in student performance statewide. Indiana’s efforts to strengthen and align standards and assessments to reflect college and career expectations more accurately should be celebrated; however, the state did very little to anticipate this drop in performance and adjust the accountability model. As a result, the state has realized multiple years of hold harmless legislation that has impacted the public release of summative ratings.

Most recently, the shift to ILEARN in 2019 resulted in a drop of over ten percentage points in each subject. Hoosier students did not regress overnight. If the state valued student performance in 2018, it should still value it in 2019, and the school accountability model should reflect that. Adopting a performance index that assigns partial points for students who are “approaching proficient” will send a clear message that the state consistently values performance while incentivizing schools to push students towards the more rigorous benchmark that is required to ensure they are prepared for postsecondary success.

**Student Performance Index**

Sample Performance Index	
Performance Level	Points
Above Proficient	125*
At Proficient	100
Approaching Proficient	50
Below Proficient	0

A performance index assigns a point value to each of the four achievement levels on the ILEARN assessments for math and English language arts. This calculation functions like Indiana’s current growth to proficiency table, where each student is assigned a point value based on his or her achievement and the school receives an overall rating based on the average of the students’ point values.

\* Special attention should be paid to assigning extra points on a performance index as to avoid having a few high performing students outweigh or mask low performance. Arkansas’ Performance Index only assigns extra points based on the net increase of advanced students from year to year, which is something Indiana may consider.<sup>iii</sup>



### Multiple Measures

The Board should include a limited number of additional student success indicators in the calculation of the summative rating, not to exceed 20%, for schools serving grades K-8. This list serves as a starting point for the development of the next accountability model and should not be considered exhaustive or a final recommendation. Each indicator should be considered in isolation and based on how it interacts with other indicators in the model to create a comprehensive assessment of school quality.

Additional considerations:

**Indicators included in the accountability model should directly align to a state educational goal.** Indiana should have the capacity to support schools directly or indirectly in achieving the expected outcome on each indicator and the willingness to invest resources to do so.

**Each indicator in the model must carry enough weight to influence the summative rating.** Too many indicators can lead to frustration as schools struggle to understand how to improve overall performance as measured by the model.

**The more indicators included in the model, the less autonomy schools have over resource distribution.** The accountability model signals to schools where to focus resources. Too many indicators can strain local flexibility and autonomy.

### Advanced Mathematics in Middle School

Successful completion of advanced math courses such as Algebra I in middle school has a direct impact on college readiness and intentions to pursue a bachelor's degree. While "Algebra-for-All" policies have had negative consequences, research suggests many students, particularly students from disadvantaged backgrounds, lack access to advanced courses in middle school or are overlooked by discretionary assignment policies.<sup>iv</sup>

Establishing a statewide goal and incorporating an indicator for advanced math course completion into the K-8 model will reward schools for identifying prepared students and expanding access to accelerated math courses while in middle school.

A three-year rolling performance average that includes bonus points for improvement in the latest year may help smooth out fluctuation from year-to-year and strengthen this indicator.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Literacy

Research has consistently found strong correlations between a child's ability to read proficiently by the end of third grade and the child's likelihood of graduating on time.<sup>v</sup> Measuring 3<sup>rd</sup> grade literacy in isolation provides important data on the effectiveness of a school's primary literacy program and encourages schools to make investments early on in a student's academic career.

A three-year rolling performance average that includes bonus points for improvement in the latest year may help smooth out fluctuation and strengthen this indicator. Additional analysis should be conducted by assessment experts to determine if IREAD3 or a qualifying score on the ILEARN assessment is the most valid and reliable tool to measure this indicator.

### Career Navigation and Exploration

The state should consider incorporating a statewide measure of employability standards and/or the completion of a career exploration program in the K-8 accountability model (specifically grades 7 and 8). Research has identified middle school as a time when students can benefit most from career exploration. In 2018, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation requiring schools to include interdisciplinary employability skills standards into the curriculum.<sup>vi</sup> Incorporating such a metric will better align the accountability model to statewide priorities for postsecondary success and promote meaningful career exploration opportunities where they matter the most. If selected, the Board should work with career and technical education (CTE) experts to determine the most effective and valid way to measure this indicator.





## Multiple Measures (Cont'd)

### Science and Social Studies Proficiency

Federal law requires Indiana to assess students on science and social studies (including civics). Incorporating student proficiency on science and social studies assessments into the model may encourage schools to adopt a well-rounded curriculum and expand cross-curricular integration. Stakeholder feedback revealed a consistent theme that the current model for K-8 accountability leads to the narrowing of curriculum to focus on ELA and math. Indiana currently assesses both science (grades 4 and 6) and social studies (grade 5) using standardized statewide assessments. In 2019, statewide performance on both assessments was below 50%, suggesting there is a need to increase student achievement on these standards.

Using a three-year rolling proficiency average for this indicator with a bonus for improvement in the latest year may help eliminate fluctuation from year to year given the small n-size.

### Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10 percent or more of one's enrolled days during the school year. The chronic absentee snowball begins in kindergarten and grade 1, where research has shown that chronic absenteeism in these early grades reduces one's chances of reading proficiency by grade 3.

Regular school attendance is important to the academic and social and emotional advancement of students. Poor attendance yields poor performance, precludes progress in developing grit and perseverance, and limits exposure to one's peers. Research indicates a sort of snowball effect in the education system resulting from poor attendance, and specifically chronic absenteeism.

This indicator is currently included in Indiana's ESSA accountability model and includes an improvement component to encourage schools to continue working with all students, even after they miss 10 percent of the school year.

## Limitations of School Climate and Culture Surveys

Climate and culture surveys present several problems when incorporated into a school accountability model. Indiana's ESSA plan currently commits to exploring the use of such surveys in Indiana's accountability model; however, they are not included in this framework. Survey data provide important feedback for schools in the continuous improvement process and including responses in a school accountability model interferes with that purpose. Specific concerns include:

- Importance of **each school maintaining the flexibility to use a survey tool that aligns to their local priorities and needs;**
- Selection bias in respondents and pressure to make a school look good means **results will be invalid, unreliable, and unhelpful to efforts to improve the learning environment;**
- The effort to administer, validate, and aggregate survey data is **time intensive and expensive; and**
- While surveys reveal strengths and opportunities within a school, including them in an accountability **model dilutes the emphasis on learning outcomes and postsecondary readiness.**<sup>vii</sup>



**Additional Federal Indicators**

The following indicators should be included as a component of the complementary federal accountability system which identifies schools who are eligible for additional resources and support. This approach will ensure schools receive a summative performance rating based on the state accountability model and are then identified for federal school improvement resources and intervention based on the state model plus the performance of historically marginalized students.

**Gap Closure Goal**

Indiana’s ESSA plan should adopt a gap closure indicator based on the performance and growth for each student subgroup.

In 2019, fewer than 1 in 4 African American students and 1 in 3 low-income students were proficient in ELA or math, lagging their white and more affluent peers by nearly 30%. Therefore, it is critical that any gap closure indicator adopted in Indiana’s ESSA plan includes student performance in addition to growth.

Indiana’s ESSA plan currently includes a gap closure goal based on growth of the bottom 25% of all students. This approach fails to acknowledge the persistent proficiency gaps that exist based on race, poverty, special learning needs, and English language proficiency.

**English Language Proficiency**

Indiana’s ESSA plan should maintain its current approach to measuring the progress of English language learners, which is required by federal law. This focus aligns to Indiana’s recent efforts to support English learners by providing funding to schools that serve students with limited English proficiency and will help ensure additional school improvement resources are targeted towards addressing language proficiency.

Currently, only 40% of Indiana public schools were eligible for this indicator based on enrollment of students with limited English proficiency. Therefore, most schools would not be subject to this indicator if it were to be included in the state accountability model. Therefore, this indicator should remain a part of the complementary federal identification for school improvement, but not be included in the state summative rating.

**Lessons Learned from Annual Yearly Progress Under No Child Left Behind (NCLB)**

Under NCLB, passed in 2001, the federal government required annual statewide assessments in ELA and math and established a nationwide expectation that 100% of students in the United States will be proficient by 2014. Eligible public schools were held accountable for annual yearly progress of each student subgroup towards this goal and failed to meet AYP expectations if even one subgroup lagged expected performance. Data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) show that NCLB had a positive impact on student learning, specifically the achievement of historically marginalized subgroups; however, many schools still failed to meet federal expectations for AYP. In 2009, fewer than 50% of eligible Indiana public schools met AYP, which deteriorated trust and relevance of the federal accountability model.

Indiana should maintain a focus on subgroup performance by incorporating a gap closure indicator based on statewide goals for each student subgroup in the supplementary federal accountability model. This approach will maintain Indiana’s commitment to the achievement of all students and allow the state to strategically target school improvement resources toward eliminating persistent achievement gaps.



## 9-12 ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

This section provides an overview of indicators that may be included in the next iteration of Indiana's accountability model for grades 9-12. This framework reflects input from education stakeholders, a review of existing state and federal accountability models, and additional research and analysis related to best practices in school accountability. The framework should be viewed as a resource in the development of the next iteration of Indiana's accountability model, not a complete accountability model in and of itself.

### Key Considerations

The following themes emerged during stakeholder feedback and have significantly informed the framework outlined in this section:

#### Focus on College & Career Readiness

The addition of a college and career readiness (CCR) indicator to the high school accountability model in 2012 has not only been popular with stakeholders, it has led to measurable student success. Between 2012 and 2016, the percentage of Indiana graduates earning college credit while in high school increased 15%, and the average number of dual credits earned per student increased nearly 5 credits (from 7.6 to 12.1).<sup>viii</sup> The current CCR indicator incorporates many of the postsecondary competencies included in the new graduation pathways. The Board should consider revising this indicator to include more rigorous student outcomes and establish an ambitious yet attainable target for schools to pursue.

#### Focus Across Grades 9 through 12

Despite including multiple measures, the high school model remains largely focused on two grade levels (10<sup>th</sup> grade ISTEP assessment, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade graduation/CCR). The Board should consider incorporating indicators that capture progress throughout a student's high school career into the model.

#### Monitoring Postsecondary Success

The topic of postsecondary outcomes came up consistently throughout stakeholder conversations. Some suggested that meaningful postsecondary outcomes, including enrollment in a post-secondary institution, meaningful employment after graduation, and enlisting in the military, should be incorporated directly into the model. Others were concerned about the number of non-school factors involved in a student's postsecondary success and questioned the validity of holding high schools accountable for outcomes after a student graduates. What most stakeholders agree upon is that schools should do more to monitor the postsecondary success of their students and use that information to inform decision making. This approach is echoed in the legislative accountability panel recommendations from 2019.

### Key Concepts & Concrete Ideas

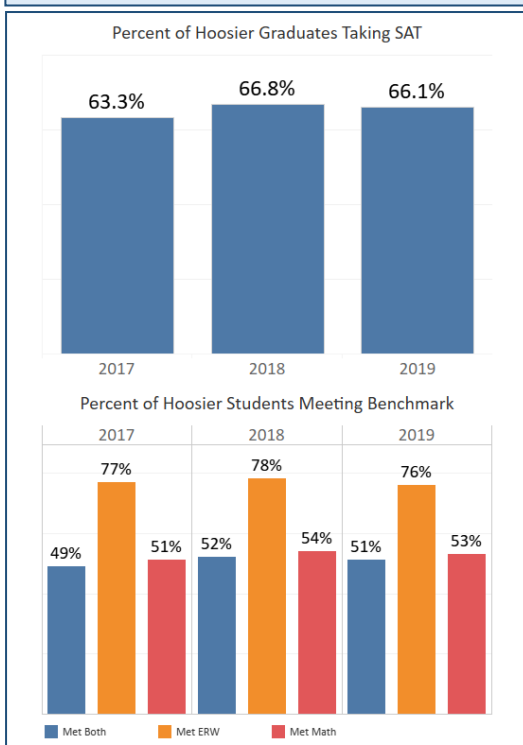
This section includes concepts and concrete ideas for the Board to consider in the next iteration of Indiana's 9-12 accountability model. The research-based proposals included in this section are informed by stakeholder feedback and are presented for the Board's consideration when drafting an initial administrative rule. This section is not a formal recommendation for an accountability model. Each proposed indicator should be analyzed based on the general considerations outlined in the beginning of the framework before being included in the proposed rule.



### Measuring Student Performance

Indiana should consider the benefit of adopting a performance index that assigns points for different levels of student achievement, like how growth points are assigned, to replace the proficiency rate indicator. Data suggest Indiana’s shift to the SAT as the high school assessment will result in a statewide drop in proficiency rates. Using a performance index will help account for this expected drop and allow the state to adopt a rigorous benchmark for proficiency while ensuring the accountability model does not unfairly evaluate school performance.

#### Participation & Performance on SAT



In 2019, 66% of Indiana high school graduates took the SAT while in high school; three out of four of those students met the Reading/Writing college ready benchmark (76%) and just over half met the math benchmark (53%).<sup>ix</sup> This equates to fewer than 50% of students in the 2019 graduating cohort being proficient on reading/writing and math. Moreover, students taking the SAT have historically outperformed their peers on other Indiana statewide assessments, another reason a shift to SAT is expected to result in a statewide drop in proficiency rates.

Indiana’s efforts to strengthen academic expectations to align with national and global college and career ready expectations should be applauded. At the same time, it is essential that statewide policies demonstrate an understanding that this transition will take time and accommodate for the impact a shift to a more rigorous assessment will have on summative performance ratings.

#### Student Performance Index

Sample Performance Index	
Performance Level	Points
Advanced CCR	125*
CCR Benchmark	100
Approaching CCR	50
Below CCR	0

A performance index assigns point values based on different levels of achievement on each section of the SAT. This calculation functions like Indiana’s current growth to proficiency table, where each student is assigned a point value based on the student’s achievement and the school receives an overall rating based on the average of students’ point values. Prior to adopting this approach, Indiana would need to establish a proficiency cut score on the SAT along with at least two additional achievement level indicators.

\* Special attention should be paid to assigning extra points on a performance index as to avoid having a few high performing students outweigh or mask low performance. Arkansas’ Performance Index only assigns extra points based on the net increase of advanced students from year to year, which is something Indiana may consider.



**Multiple Measures**

Since 2012, Indiana’s high school accountability model has incorporated multiple measures to complement student achievement and growth. The multiple measures included in the current accountability model have been popular and effective, but they must be updated to accommodate for the new graduation pathways requirements.

**College and Career Readiness**

The recently adopted graduation pathways have incorporated the current outcomes included in the CCR indicator, rendering the metric duplicative and obsolete. The Board should consider replacing the current metrics included in the CCR indicator with more rigorous outcomes and credentials including:

- Military Service
- Technical Certification
- State Transfer General Education Core

The Board may then establish a rigorous, yet attainable statewide goal based on the current number of graduates achieving the selected metrics. The original CCR goal was 25% of graduates meeting one of the qualifying metrics. The Board should consider adopting a similar approach once the revised indicators are identified.

**9<sup>th</sup> Grade on Track**

Research has consistently demonstrated that students who complete their freshman year having accumulated the required number of credits to be on-track to graduate are significantly more likely to earn their diploma on time.<sup>x</sup> The Board should consider incorporating a 9th grade on-track indicator into the high school accountability model. Including this indicator will signal the importance of supporting students as they transition from middle to high school and provide a critical early warning signal to schools for students who are at-risk of not graduating.

Given the strong correlation with graduation, 9<sup>th</sup> grade on-track is an effective and meaningful metric of college and career readiness while a student is still in high school.

**Weighted Graduation Index**

Indiana should consider adopting a weighted graduation index to replace the four-year cohort adjusted graduation rate indicator that is in the current model. The 2019 legislative accountability panel recommended that the Indiana General Assembly consider changes to how the state calculates a school’s graduation rate. Additional stakeholder feedback revealed concerns regarding transfer students who are over-age/under-accredited who are included in a school’s graduation rate and students who are removed from a graduation cohort late in their academic career.

One concept is to distribute the four years a student is included in a graduation cohort across each school in which the student was enrolled. A school would receive one quarter of the graduation rate for each year a student was enrolled for a full academic year. If a student remained in the same school all four years, then the school would be evaluated for all four years. However, if the student transferred into the school in their fourth year, the receiving school would be accountable for one-fourth of the graduation rate. This would ensure the graduation indicator was distributed across all four years of high school. This is in contrast to the current approach to graduation, which is calculated based on where a student is enrolled on June 30 of the student’s senior year, regardless of how long the student has been enrolled in that school.



### Additional Federal Indicators

The following indicators should be included as a component of the complementary federal accountability system which identifies schools that are eligible for additional resources and support. This approach will ensure schools receive a summative performance rating based on the state accountability model and are then identified for federal school improvement resources and intervention based on the state model plus the performance of historically marginalized students.

#### Gap Closure Goal

Indiana's ESSA plan should adopt a gap closure indicator based on SAT performance for each student subgroup. Gaps exist in access to and achievement on the SAT by race, income level, special learning needs, and English proficiency. As Indiana shifts to this more rigorous expectation for college and career readiness in high school, special attention should be paid to ensuring all students have an opportunity to achieve the benchmark.

Indiana's ESSA plan currently includes a gap closure goal based on growth of the bottom 25% of all students. The shift to SAT will eliminate growth in high school, making it impossible to calculate this indicator in the future. Additionally, this approach fails to acknowledge the persistent proficiency gaps that exist based on race, poverty, special learning needs, and English language proficiency.

#### English Language Proficiency

Indiana's ESSA plan should maintain its current approach to measuring the progress of English language learners, which is required by federal law. This focus aligns to Indiana's recent efforts to provide funding to schools that serve students with limited English proficiency, and will help ensure additional school improvement resources are targeted towards addressing language proficiency.

Currently, only 40% of Indiana public schools were eligible for this indicator based on enrollment of students with limited English proficiency. Therefore, most schools would not be subject to this indicator if it were to be included in the state accountability model. Therefore, this indicator should remain a part of the complementary federal identification for school improvement, but not be included in the state summative rating.

#### Graduation Rate

ESSA requires states to use the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate when identifying schools for additional support and improvement. If Indiana decides to adopt a weighted graduation index for the state model, the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate will have to be included in Indiana's ESSA plan unless the state receives a waiver of this requirement. This indicator would only be used to identify schools for additional support and would not impact a school's overall performance rating under the state model.

### End Notes

- i. Adapted from: ExcelinEd, Nov. 2016, *ESSA Playbook Series: A-F School Accountability*.
- ii. "School Accountability Panel - Final Recommendations." Indiana General Assembly, 30 Oct. 2019, [iga.in.gov/static-documents/8/5/d/c/85dc5186/2019-school-accountability-panel-final-recommendations.pdf](http://iga.in.gov/static-documents/8/5/d/c/85dc5186/2019-school-accountability-panel-final-recommendations.pdf).
- iii. Every Student Succeeds Act - Arkansas State Plan, pp. 33–34.
- iv. United States Department of Education, *A Leak in the STEM Pipeline: Taking Algebra Early*.
- v. Fiester, Leila. 2010, *EARLY WARNING! Why Reading by the End of Third Grade Matters*, Annie E. Casey Foundation.
- vi. Association for Career and Technical Education, 2018, *Career Exploration in Middle School: Setting Students on the Path to Success*.



- vii. Adapted from: ExcelinEd, Nov. 2016, *ESSA Playbook Series: A-F School Accountability*.
- viii. Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 2017, *College Readiness Report Supplement: Dual Credit Taking and College Performance Trends*.
- ix. College Board, 2019, *SAT Suite of Assessments Report – Indiana*.
- x. Allensworth, E. and Easton, J. 2005. *The on-track indicator as a predictor of high school graduation*, Chicago: Consortium on Chicago School Research