



# INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Indiana State Board of Education  
**From:** Ron Sandlin, Director of Policy and Legislation  
**Date:** February 1, 2017  
**RE:** Determination of State Intervention for Caze Elementary School (EVSC)

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Pursuant to IC 20-31-9-4, the Indiana State Board of Education shall consider options for school improvement for any school placed in the lowest category or designation of school improvement, an 'F' rating, for six consecutive years.

### History of State Intervention for Caze Elementary School

Caze Elementary School in the Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (EVSC) received a sixth consecutive 'F' performance rating following the 14/15 school year. As a result, the State Board of Education is required to consider implementing an option for school improvement under IC 20-31-9-4.

At the State Board of Education public hearing for Caze Elementary School on August 12, 2015, officials from EVSC presented a plan to improve student performance through the creation of a Transformation Zone. The plan was initiated in 2012 and implementation had begun throughout the district.

On January 26, 2016 the State Board of Education adopted a resolution in support of the existing turnaround efforts at Caze Elementary school effectively postponing any decision related to state intervention under IC 20-31-9 based on the 2014/2015 school letter grades for one year.

Following the 15/16 school year Caze Elementary School received a seventh consecutive placement in the lowest category or designation of school improvement. Therefore, the State Board of Education is required to consider implementing one of the approved options for school improvement.

### EVSC Transformation Zone

Since 2012, EVSC has partnered with Mass Insight Education to establish a Transformation Zone within the corporation and rethink how the central office differentiates support for its most

struggling schools. Under the guidance of Superintendent Dr. David Smith, EVSC placed five of its most-struggling schools under a staff of three central-office employees with the unique skill-set and authority to redesign central support structures and align district resources to school needs.

This systems-level approach to school improvement is guided by research-based best practices outlined in “The Turnaround Challenge” written by Mass Insight. Since the beginning of the district-led intervention in 2012, EVSC has dramatically improved student performance, cutting the total number of schools designated as a ‘D’ and ‘F’ in half, from 20 total schools in 2012 down to 10 schools in 2016. The corporation has also decreased the number ‘F’ schools over these four years. In 2012, fourteen (14) schools received an ‘F’ rating. Only four (4) schools received an ‘F’ rating in the most recently released 15/16 performance ratings.

Although EVSC is only four years into this school improvement effort, the success of the Transformation Zone has garnered national attention from school improvement experts and has been highlighted in a feature piece in Education Week.

#### Recommended Intervention at Caze Elementary School

As a result of their demonstrated ability to support school improvement through systems-level transformation, it is recommended that the State Board of Education approve the school corporation’s plan to improve the school through the creation of a Transformation Zone. This option ensures continuity for the school and the community related to ongoing efforts to improve student outcomes while maintaining careful oversight of performance from the State Board of Education.

EVSC’s track-record of success provides ample evidence to justify supporting their ongoing efforts to improve student outcomes at Caze Elementary School. The State Board of Education and the Indiana Department of Education will work closely with school and district leaders to establish an agreed upon set of performance metrics to inform monitoring of this intervention. If the school fails to reach these interim benchmarks for improvement, the State Board of Education holds the right to alter the intervention and select a different option for school improvement under Indiana state law.