

MINUTES
Indiana State Board of Education
Business Meeting

March 4, 2026
9:00 A.M. E.D.T.

Conference Room C
Indiana Government Center South
302 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN. 46204

<https://www.youtube.com/live/z-c4jrvGvQo>

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, Mr. Pat Mapes, Ms. Kristin Rentschler, and Mr. B.J. Watts.

Board Members Absent: None.

- 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 January 14, 2026, meeting, were approved by unanimous vote.
 - A. January 14, 2026 - [Memo](#)
- IV. **Statement from the Chair:** Dr. Jenner began her statement by welcoming everyone in the room and explained how honored she felt to celebrate the work Indiana has done to improve the high school model for students. Dr. Jenner described how the SAT testing windows have officially opened and thanked educators, families, parents, and students for their hard work to push through the testing period. Dr. Jenner also highlighted Read Across America Week, sharing examples of surprise guest readers, including the mayor of Madison reading at Rykers' Ridge Elementary School. She also recognized Mr. William Durham and his fraternity for reading to students.

Additionally, Dr. Jenner discussed the announcement of the Indiana Career Coaching Grant. Dr. Jenner described how \$15 million dollars were awarded to schools across the state to improve Indiana's college and career coaching efforts. The funding went to roughly twenty-one organizations. Dr. Jenner also described how the board is eager to hear from Russlynn Ali from XQ as the organization begins their nationwide tour highlighting how high school can be more meaningful for students across the country. Additionally, Dr. Jenner discussed how the board is eager to approve Indiana's new accountability rule.

Lastly, Dr. Jenner explained the education gains made during the 2026 legislative session of the Indiana General Assembly. One of the biggest efforts during this session was to better protect

students from the addictive technology present on social media platforms. Dr. Jenner recognized Representative Joanna King for her hard work and commitment to this goal and congratulated the state for taking bipartisan action to protect children online. Other legislative initiatives included increasing the reading threshold for the literacy cadre and improving civics literacy across the state.

- V. **Board Member Comments and Reports:** Mr. William Durham explained how his fraternity (Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity Inc.) participated in the Room to Read initiative which occurs on the National Day of Reading. He described how his fraternity received the opportunity to read to students at Indianapolis Public School 42. Overall, the experience was designed to encourage children to delve into the joy of reading and allowed Mr. William and his fraternity to engage with students in the classroom.
- VI. **Public Comment:** Dr. Jeff Butts, the Executive Director of the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents (IAPSS), began his public comment by expressing his sincere appreciation to the DOE team for their effort in developing the new accountability rule. Dr. Butts described how accountability exists for one reason, and that reason is students. Families deserve honest and transparent information about how their child's school is performing, and educators deserve a system that recognizes growth, excellence, and continuous improvement. Dr. Butts explained how superintendents across Indiana are responsible for turning these accountability systems into meaningful improvement for students. Dr. Butts described how past accountability models have often been too complex for families to understand and sometimes emphasized compliance more than outcomes. Growth and proficiency were not always balanced in ways that fully reflected students' progress, and schools were not always given clear signals on how to improve. Dr. Butts explained how this new rule strengthens the balance between student proficiency and growth and recognizes both achievement and progress. It also sharpens the focus on foundational literacy and mathematics which remain the bedrock of students' long-term success at the high school level. Additionally, the new system more clearly connects accountability to graduation and meaningful post-secondary readiness, whether that pathway is enrollment, enlistment, or employment. Dr. Butts described how the new model tells a more complete story regarding what schools are doing to prepare students for life beyond high school and provides clear signals for schools on what matters most. On behalf of Indiana superintendents, Dr. Butts thanked the department for the collaboration and thoughtful leadership that have shaped this proposal. Dr. Butts explained how IAPSS stands ready to continue working with the board and the department to ensure every student is prepared for a successful future.

Dr. Todd Bess, the Executive Director of the Indiana Association of School Principals (IASP), began his public comment by explaining how the new accountability model prioritizes student growth and recognizes the progress schools make every day with students at all starting points. He described how the new model strengthens alignment to graduation outcomes and meaningful post-graduation readiness indicators. Dr. Bess described how school leaders can easily explain the linkage between Indiana's new diploma, Indiana's seals, and the accountability system. Dr. Bess also explained how the new model improves transparency, allowing families and communities to better understand school performance. Additionally, Dr. Bess highlighted the mission of IASP and school principals – to ensure that every decision at every metric drives high quality education and continuous improvement. When accountability reflects the real work happening inside Indiana schools, it strengthens trust, sharpens practice, and advances student outcomes. On behalf of IASP, Dr. Bess expressed appreciation for the department's work in developing this new model and conveyed support for the new accountability framework.

Ms. Rachel Hathaway, the Indiana Executive Director of Teach Plus, began her public comment by describing the goal of Teach Plus – to empower educators who take leadership roles in policy issues to lean into their position as agents of change. Ms. Hathaway discussed how teachers are closest to the work of improving student outcomes and believes they are best positioned to inform and drive change. Teach Plus expressed its appreciation in working intentionally with the department to ensure that the new accountability framework incorporates teacher insight. Ms. Hathaway discussed how accountability is about improving schools, not labeling them. When paired with support, professional learning, and clear communication, the new framework has the potential to strengthen teaching and learning statewide. Overall, Teach Plus remains committed to elevating teacher voices in the ongoing refinement and implementation of this model and looks forward to continued collaboration to ensure the system works in service of students and educators.

VII. **Consent Agenda:** The consent agenda was approved by unanimous vote.

- A. Third-Party Recognition Petitions
 - a. Cogna – Accreditation Renewal – [Memo](#)
 - b. Independent Schools Association for the Central States (ISACS) – Renewal – [Memo](#)
 - c. International Christian Accrediting Association (ICAA) – Renewal – [Memo](#)
- B. Non-Public Accreditation Petitions
 - a. Central Christian Academy North – [Memo](#)
 - b. Frankfort Christian Academy – [Memo](#)
 - c. Genai Excellence Academy – [Memo](#)
 - d. OpenEd Academy of Indiana – [Memo](#)
 - e. Smarty Pants Learning Academy – [Memo](#)
 - f. The Performing Arts Conservatory, Inc. – [Memo](#)
- C. Common School Fund Applications – [Memo](#)
- D. 1003 Flexibility Waivers – [Memo](#)
- E. 2026-2027 Formative Grant – Assessment Approval – [Memo](#)
- F. ADM Count Days for the 2026-2027 School Year – [Memo](#)

VIII. **New Business:** Mr. Paul Ketcham, IDOE, Assistant Secretary of Education, and Mr. Ron Sandlin, IDOE, Chief Innovation Officer, presented the final accountability model.

- A. Accountability Rule Approval – [Presentation](#)
 - i. Mr. Ketcham began the presentation by establishing the shared vision and goal for the new accountability model. The overarching objective was to develop a model that values all characteristics essential to student success and essential to every student's unique pathway.
 - ii. Mr. Ketcham explained how Indiana is focused on ensuring more students have access to the knowledge, skills, and experiences they need now and in the future.
 - iii. Additionally, the accountability model has been directly informed by educators, students, parents, families, community leaders, industry partners, and other stakeholders. As Indiana continues to expand educational opportunities for students, how school accountability is measured must also evolve.
 - iv. Mr. Ketcham also described how Hoosiers consistently agree that the most important characteristics to a student's lifelong success are: academic mastery, career and postsecondary readiness, communication and collaboration, work ethic, and civic, financial, and digital literacy. On the Graduates Prepared to Succeed

(GPS) platform, the department identified eighteen indicators to measure these characteristics across K-12 education continuum and beyond.

- v. Mr. Ketcham explained there were four key design priorities for the accountability model: transparency, academic and skills focused, student-centered, and data driven. The model is designed to be transparent by providing a simple framework that is easy for schools and parents to understand. The new model values academic outcomes, as well as skills and experiences. It also encourages schools to focus on improvement for each individual student and uses longitudinal data to prioritize what matters most to future success.
- vi. Additionally, Mr. Ketcham discussed how Hoosiers were engaged in each of the public comment periods and gave crucial feedback. Several key themes emerged from the stakeholder feedback. These themes include: broad support for elevating a variety of knowledge, skills, and experiences that contribute to a student's future success, including additional indicators aligned to specific pathways; the importance of prioritizing proficiency while encouraging improvement for all students through academic growth and skill development; and the need for a transparent and simple accountability model that is meaningful to parents and families and provides schools a clear roadmap for continuous improvement.
- vii. Dr. Jenner described how the feedback was collected and workshopped through hours spent in focus groups, as well as through an online feedback form.
- viii. Mr. Sandlin discussed that the foundation of this new accountability model is to ensure cohesion with other policies in the state of Indiana, including IGPS. In developing this new accountability framework, the department really emphasized and prioritized the key building blocks throughout the entire Indiana GPS continuum. Mr. Sandlin described how the other shift in the model has been to think cohesively about the individual student by balancing their academic mastery and additional knowledge, skills, and experiences. So, as students get older, the opportunity they have to demonstrate success outside of academic mastery expands.
- ix. Mr. Sandlin explained how every student matters in this new model. This model encourages schools to address the individual needs of each student and ensures that students' unique knowledge, skills, and experiences are transparently reflected in a school's accountability grade. Each school's letter grade will be determined based on the average points generated by all students.
- x. Mr. Sandlin discussed some of the key changes in the final draft of the accountability model based on feedback offered during the last public comment period.
 - a) Feedback illustrated that language development is foundational to literacy. For students who are just beginning to learn English, in addition to considering passage of IREAD, the accountability model should also consider WIDA assessment, which measures listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. To ensure schools continue prioritizing literacy for all students, IREAD will be required for every student, and an additional, rigorous assessment (WIDA) will be considered for ELs enrolled in Indiana for less than two years to ensure they are learning English as quickly as possible.
 - b) Feedback also described how academic proficiency is linked to long-term success in K-12 education and beyond. In the second draft, academic proficiency and meeting one's individual growth target are weighted

equally; achieving proficiency should carry more weight. The solution is to place greater weight on academic proficiency by recognizing students who are growing and making progress toward proficiency. This ensures a school will not generate more points for a student who has not achieved proficiency compared to a student who has achieved proficiency.

- c) Additionally, feedback showed that grade seven has fewer opportunities for students to earn success indicators compared to other grades. This is an opportunity to incentivize steps students can take in middle school to be better prepared for high school. Advanced coursework is a key part of high school readiness, but shifting the high school coursework success indicator to grade eight would better align with when most students actually take high school-level classes. The high school coursework indicator was also adjusted to grade eight to better reflect when most students are academically and developmentally ready for these more rigorous courses.
- d) Dr. Jenner reinforced the idea that the graduation plan for middle schoolers is a living document, designed to be permeable to allow students the flexibility to explore and maximize their outcomes ahead in high school.
- e) Feedback also illustrated that students with the most significant cognitive disabilities face barriers to completing statewide assessments. Students who participate in Indiana's alternate assessment (I AM) would have fewer opportunities to generate points. Note that federal law caps participation in the alternate assessment to 1% of students. The solution is to encourage academic mastery for all students by ensuring grade 3-8 and grade 10 students participating in the I AM assessment can earn points for academic mastery, with those who demonstrate proficiency earning the maximum possible points.
- f) Feedback highlighted that understanding our nation's government and our individual roles and responsibilities is essential to becoming good, productive citizens. The ILEARN U.S. Government End-of-Course Assessment provides an assessment-based measure of civic literacy – one of the five Indiana GPS characteristics – that should be elevated. To elevate the importance of civic literacy, a new success indicator was created for students who take U.S. Government in high school and demonstrate a strong understanding of civics and government on the ILEARN U.S. Government End-of-Course Assessment.
- g) Also, feedback illustrated that to truly capture how our schools are preparing students for future success, it should reflect all students in a cohort, not just graduates. Tying a school's graduation rate directly to its accountability rating is necessary to meet federal accountability requirements. The solution is to align Indiana's model with federal accountability requirements by making graduation rate a standalone indicator worth 10% of a school's grade twelve rating. Schools above 95% will receive the full 100 points. The largest factor impacting a school's overall grade (80%) in grade twelve will continue to be based on readiness, seal attainment, and demonstrating additional knowledge, skills, and experiences.

- h) Feedback described how academic proficiency is central to the role of K-12 education, at all grade levels. Ensuring every student's high school assessment results are reflected in a school's accountability rating is necessary to meet federal accountability requirements. The solution is to make the SAT or I AM proficiency a standalone indicator worth 10% of a school's grade twelve rating, rather than an optional success indicator. Recognizing that students have unique future aspirations, schools with 60% or more students reaching proficiency on SAT will receive 100 points each for Reading and Writing and Math. The largest factor impacting a school's overall grade (80%) in grade twelve will continue to be based on readiness seal attainment and demonstrating additional knowledge, skills, and experiences.
 - i) Lastly, feedback demonstrated that students may choose a variety of assessment options to demonstrate college and career readiness, based on their future goals. In addition to taking the SAT as a standalone indicator, students should be able to earn additional points when demonstrating success on these other assessment options. To recognize all ways a student may show college and career readiness, the solution is to add two new success indicators, which allow students to earn points for the Classical Learning Test (CLT) and the ACT. This is in addition to the SAT or I AM assessments being a standalone indicator.
- xi. Mr. Sandlin went on to explain several student examples across the K-12 continuum illustrating how the new accountability model works at different grade levels.
- xii. Dr. Jenner explained how Indiana is attempting to grade students and schools in their entirety through this new accountability model.
- xiii. Mr. Sandlin also discussed how Indiana's new K-12 accountability model provides parents and families with honest, transparent information about how their child's school is performing and provides educators with a system that recognizes growth, excellence, and continuous improvement. Indiana's transition plan allows schools, families, and communities to clearly see how performance is measured, where they are starting today, and what it takes to improve for students. Indiana's approach to implementation will drive continuous and real improvement for students by prioritizing clear expectations, transparent data, and intentional supports.
- xiv. Mr. Sandlin explained that the first year of letter grades will be referred to as year zero and will set a clear baseline. This is different than any past A-F years. Schools are implementing the new diploma and readiness seals, as well as ILEARN checkpoints. As Indiana has learned from other states, a transition plan is essential to both short and long-term success.
- xv. Overall, the shared goal is continuous improvement. Schools will be able to clearly see where they can improve and have support in developing a plan to get there. The new accountability model is about transparently showing where Indiana is today and being clear about where Indiana needs to go in the future. Together, Indiana must keep its focus on continuous improvement for every community, every school, and most importantly, every student.
- xvi. Lastly, Mr. Sandlin described several implementation resources that the department will distribute in the coming months. These resources include: a comprehensive success indicator dictionary, a data reference guide showing schools exactly which data reports are used to determine their accountability

grade, informational webinars, a frequently asked questions document for district and school leaders, teachers, school board members, as well as parents and families, data analysis tools for district and school leaders, and a resource to help schools and communities understand summative grades.

- xvii. Mr. B.J. Watts explained the power of the new model from a parent perspective. He described how the new methodology recognizes how different and diverse academic mastery can look for each individual student. Mr. Watts also discussed the intentionality of the new model and how it partners with school systems to ensure students have opportunities to grow and gain academic mastery in a variety of areas.
- xviii. Mr. Pat Mapes discussed his appreciation for the fact that the department has tied in its other systems to the new model. The focus on improving literacy rates across the state is highlighted in the new accountability model. Mr. Mapes also described how this is a commonsense accountability model that will allow parents to see how schools are improving.
- xix. Ms. Katie Mote expressed her appreciation for Dr. Jenner and her team for their foundational work in building the new model. Ms. Mote also echoed Mr. Watts and discussed her appreciation from a parental perspective.
- xx. Mr. Scott Bess discussed education alignment across the state. From the new diploma roll-out to the legislature incentivizing the new diploma seals, the accountability model grades schools on factors that the department has prioritized across the years. Mr. Bess explained how many accountability models across the country are closely tied to demographics, but Indiana's new framework allows schools to work with all students across all backgrounds to expand opportunities.
- xxi. Ms. Erika Dilosa expressed her appreciation to Mr. Sandlin and the team for building a model that recognizes each individual student. She explained how students with special needs tend to fall through the cracks, but this model ensures that every student matters. Ms. Dilosa also appreciates the transparency and public comment periods that went into this model and encouraged individuals to participate in the process because their voices will be heard.
- xxii. Mr. B.J. Watts discussed how the Indiana constitution empowers the Indiana General Assembly to establish educational policy for the state of Indiana. Indiana Code 20-31-3-1 provides that the legislature may delegate its educational policy authority to the Indiana State Board of Education to establish education policy and procedures. The rule up for adoption was promulgated under House Enrolled Act 1489-2025, which directs the board to develop a new methodology for assigning school performance ratings and adopt a rule necessary to implement the factors established by the legislature. The board has considered its duties under the Indiana Constitution to assure that the rule balances the factors emphasized by the legislature. LSA 25-370, following extensive public comment and revisions, accomplishes that goal. The goal of the legislature was promulgated in consideration with the board's duties under the Indiana Constitution and shall be adopted as a final rule of the board. Mr. Watts made a motion that the board adopt LSA 25-370 as its final rule and directed the department to take all necessary steps to obtain approvals and final publication. The motion was seconded, followed by no discussion. Dr. Jenner requested a roll call vote, and each member voted "yes" as Mr. Philip Gordon, IDOE, General Counsel, called their names. The motion passed 11-0.

B. The Future is High School Report

- i. Ms. Russlynn Ali, the CEO of XQ, began the organization's presentation by discussing the goal of modernizing high school education. Ms. Ali described how states that move to redesign high school will have the strongest economies and communities a decade from now. The future of high school is not just education policy. It is workforce and opportunity policy. Ms. Ali recognized Indiana as a national model for rethinking the high school experience. In XQ's national report regarding ten policy actions that most accelerate transformation, Indiana has already met six. Indiana was early in redefining credit around proficiency instead of seat time and created direct pathways from high school into higher education. Indiana has also built a high-quality framework for work-based learning and youth apprenticeships, ensuring students can earn credit for meaningful learning beyond the classroom. Indiana also has alignment across the statewide education pipeline. Ms. Ali explained that what Indiana chooses to do in this moment will not only drive outcomes for Hoosier students, but it will also define what modern high school can look like across the country. Ms. Ali recognized Dr. Jenner and the board for their efforts in setting a national example.
- ii. Mr. Makys Villafance, an eleventh-grade student from Purdue Polytechnic High School (PPHS), spoke on his high school experience. Coming from Puerto Rico, it was not easy for Mr. Villafance to transition to a new education system in Indiana. He recognized his teachers at PPHS for their patience, kindness, and persistence. Mr. Villafance explained that PPHS prepares its students for life beyond the classroom and spoke on his positive internship experience as a teacher's assistant.
- iii. Ms. Jaimie Febre, an eleventh-grade student from PPHS, spoke on her high school experience, as well. Ms. Febre told her story as a student who transitioned from Puerto Rico to Indiana in 2018. She discussed how PPHS helped her adjust and pushed her outside of her comfort zone through class presentations. She also described how PPHS's film class allowed her to strengthen her communication skills and gain confidence. Ms. Febre hopes to attend Purdue University when she graduates. She explained how her experience illustrates that anything is possible when schools give students the opportunity to explore their interests and develop their skills in tangible ways.
- iv. Ms. Keeanna Warren, the CEO of PPHS, discussed how Indiana policy has created conditions for meaningful innovation in K-12 education. Indiana's education policies allow schools to design their system around rigorous academics, meaningful work-based learning opportunities, and strong partnerships with higher education partners. Ms. Warren discussed PPHS's partnership with Purdue University, highlighting student experiences with a clear pathway from high school to post-secondary success, and described how students earn credit through interdisciplinary projects and applied work. This approach is producing outcomes as 90% of students at PPHS graduate from high school. Students are encouraged to pursue post-secondary outcomes aligned to their goals. Lastly, Ms. Warren thanked Dr. Jenner and the board for their leadership and commitment to students across Indiana and for ensuring that policy works in the best interest of students.
- v. Mr. Andy Allen, the Superintendent of Plainfield Community School Corporation, began by recognizing those who came before him and those who continue to support Plainfield schools. Mr. Allen explained how in the past decade, Indiana has better attempted to define the high school experience. He described how the Plainfield Community School Corporation and the town of Plainfield have partnered together to not only meet the needs and desire of students but also to meet and

match the needs of industry partners in town. Mr. Allen also discussed how high school redesign begins with a focus on prekindergarten and visualizing how the high school experience of prekindergartners will differ from this year's graduates. Mr. Allen illustrated several examples of how Plainfield schools are aligning with Indiana's national XQ report across K-12 education. He concluded by inviting the board to the XQ event hosted at Plainfield High School that evening.

- vi. Mr. George Philhower, the Superintendent of Eastern Hancock Schools and CEO of the Indiana Microschool Collaborative, described how his organizations are on a pursuit towards the vision where each student in Indiana attends a school that feels intentionally designed for them. Mr. Philhower discussed his organizations' four design principles: joy, connection, growth, and success. Each of these principles are intended to encourage students to explore a variety of opportunities in high school, so they are better prepared for where life takes them after they graduate.
- vii. Mr. Jeremy Lugbill, the CEO of Career Academy Network of Public Schools, expressed gratitude for Dr. Jenner and the department for their efforts into high school redesign. He explained how the Career Academy Network is supportive of this work and is pushing for career-connected learning for students. Mr. Lugbill also gave several examples of how the Career Academy Network is aligning with the state's goal of redesigning high school.
- viii. Dr. Jenner concluded the meeting by noting several observations. She discussed how rare it is to see all school types coming to the table and actively engaging in building a quality educational experience for students. Dr. Jenner discussed how she could not be prouder of Indiana. She also echoed Mr. Philhower's sentiment that the new accountability model ensures Indiana is building a system that allows for the opportunity to rethink high school.

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