



# INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

## MEMORANDUM

**To:** Indiana State Board of Education  
**From:** Ron Sandlin, Senior Director of School Performance & Transformation  
**Date:** July 8, 2020  
**RE:** Elkhart Community Schools Baseline Reset Request (IC 20-19-2-22)

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**Recommendation:** Approve the baseline reset request application for Elkhart High School within Elkhart Community Schools (2305) and direct the Indiana Department of Education to assign Elkhart High School a new school number pursuant to IC 20-19-2-22.

**Background:** State law authorizes the Indiana State Board of Education (“Board”), upon request of a school corporation, to approve the issuance of new accountability baseline for a school that newly opened school. The criteria used to evaluate an application for a new accountability baseline for school number for an existing school is outlined in Board administrative rule (511 IAC 6.2-10-9).

**Analysis:** Board staff used the following three part criteria outlined in Board rule when determining whether or not to issue a new school number:

1. An increase or decrease of at least 70% of the student population
2. A significant change in the educational philosophy, curriculum, or staff
3. A change is not being made to avoid accountability

After evaluating the application and additional materials submitted by the school corporation, Board staff have determined that the application meets all three criteria for approval. The application outlines the corporation’s plan to merge two existing high schools into one school number. The two schools are relatively the same size; so, merging the two will result in a nearly 100% increase in students in the new school. Additionally, as is outlined in the resources provided along with the application, this change is pursuant to a long-term strategic plan to significantly change the educational philosophy for high school students in the corporation. The new vision will include a freshman academy that serves all ninth grade students in the corporation with a focus on college and career exploration and preparation to successfully complete a graduation pathway. This shift is meant to align to recent policy changes adopted by the Board and better serve students in the corporation. Finally, there is no evidence to suggest these changes are being made to avoid accountability. This reorganization has been discussed for several years as evidenced by the artifacts submitted with the application, and neither school involved in the merger has received an ‘F’ rating in the past two years.

In addition to this memo, additional materials related to the baseline reset are provided, including:

- Application for Baseline Reset submitted by Elkhart Community Schools
- Board minutes – Elkhart Community Schools (multiple meetings)
- Elkhart Community Schools Strategic Plan – *The Elkhart Promise* (October, 2016)
- Updated Elkhart Community Schools Strategic Plan – *The Elkhart Promise* (May, 2019)
- Elkhart Community Schools Governing Board Resolution