

MINUTES
Indiana State Board of Education
Business Meeting

September 10, 2025
9:00 A.M. E.D.T.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/live/vym5eVwilXI>

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 (by video), 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 August 13, 2025, meeting, were approved by unanimous vote.
 - A. August 13, 2025 - [Memo](#)
- IV. **Statement from the Chair:** Dr. Jenner discussed the drafting of the new accountability model and mentioned that since the previous state board meeting, there has been a public hearing for comments and suggestions. The IDOE team has started to pull together common themes from the public, and those will be shared at the next board meeting in October. The second draft of the accountability rule will be shared at the next board meeting, as well, which will trigger the statutorily required thirty-day period for public comments and suggestions. The final vote on the accountability model will take place in December after the board hears the public's feedback. The first letter grades for schools will come out in the fall of next school year, and Dr. Jenner thanked everyone for weighing in and offering suggestions on the new accountability model.

Dr. Jenner also discussed the federal flexibility waiver which would ensure the state has the maximum flexibility to serve all students across Indiana. Dr. Jenner explained how some schools have been trying to navigate forty-five funding streams when the key focus needs to be on reading, ensuring excellent STEM access, and offering high-quality learning spaces. The flexibility waiver allows schools to bypass the bureaucracy as much as possible and focus on their students. Dr. Jenner anticipates that IDOE will be able to send its waiver to the federal Department of Education at the end of the month.

Lastly, Dr. Jenner discussed her recent appointment as the commissioner for the Commission for Higher Education (CHE). Dr. Jenner explained that this is an opportunity to further the work being done in the K-12 space and utilize higher education as a continuum.

V. **Board Member Comments and Reports:** None.

VI. **Public Comment:** None.

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

- A. Fayette County School Corporation Governing Body Change - [Memo](#)
- B. Loogootee Community School Corporation Governing Body Change - [Memo](#)
- C. Barr-Reeve Latch Key Waive - [Memo](#)
- D. DeKalb County Eastern Latch Key Waiver - [Memo](#)

VIII. **New Business:** Dr. John Keller, IDOE, Chief Information Officer, Scott Bogan, IDOE, Director of Educator Preparation Programs, and Anna Shults, IDOE, Chief Academic Officer, presented updates on chronic absenteeism data, the science of reading alignment for educator preparation programs, and adolescent literacy.

A. Chronic Absenteeism Update – [Presentation](#)

- i. Dr. John Keller discussed the chronic absenteeism data for the 2024 to 2025 academic school year. Dr. Keller began by explaining how a student's attendance rate is calculated. It is the number of days a student attended school, divided by the total number of school days. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing ten percent or eighteen or more school days between excused and unexcused absences. Habitual truancy is described as having ten or more unexcused absences. Dr. Jenner explained that chronic absenteeism is similar to a student missing roughly a month of school throughout the school year and how many chronically absent students are typically absent for much longer. Dr. Keller went on to describe how there are some students whose absences can be measured in months and years when stacking the student's attendance throughout multiple school years.
- ii. To contextualize the data, the department asks how many school buses could be filled if all of Indiana's chronically absent students came to school on the same day? This year, the answer was 2,713 school buses with a capacity of 72 students. This number was 2,850 for the 2023-2024 school year.
- iii. Indiana has seen improved chronic absenteeism rates for the past three years. Compared to the 2023-2024 school year, all grade levels saw improvement in their chronic absenteeism rates. Additionally, the state saw improved chronic absenteeism rates for students of all ethnicities, for students receiving free and reduced lunch, and for English learners.
- iv. When analyzing the impact of chronic absenteeism on literacy rates, there is a fifteen percentage-point difference in 2025 between students who pass IREAD who are not chronically absent (89%) and students who pass IREAD who are chronically absent (74%).
- v. Likewise, chronic absenteeism impacts ELA proficiency and math proficiency. In 2025, 23.5% of students who were chronically absent were at or above proficiency in ELA, and 43% of students who were not chronically absent demonstrated ELA proficiency.

- vi. In 2025, 19.5% of students who were chronically absent were at or above proficiency in math, while 45.3% of students who were not chronically absent illustrated math proficiency.
 - vii. Lastly, 20.7% of 2025 high school graduates tested at a college-ready benchmark who were chronically absent, and 41.5% of 2025 high school graduates tested at a college-ready benchmark who were not chronically absent.
 - viii. Overall, Indiana is moving in the right direction, with statewide chronic absenteeism rates improving 4.4% percentage points since 2022.
 - ix. The number of schools improving their chronic absenteeism rates to below 10% is also growing. In 2025, nearly 800 schools had a chronic absenteeism rate of less than 10%, compared to fewer than 700 schools in 2024, yet 78 schools have more than 50% of students who are chronically absent.
 - x. Dr. Keller explained how Indiana is continuing to elevate the importance of attendance by utilizing an Attendance Insights Dashboard which publicly displays longitudinal attendance and chronic absenteeism data at grade, school, and corporation-level. There is also an Early Warning Dashboard which provides actionable data for educators and families as they work together to support students most at risk of not graduating. Lastly, there is an Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed performance dashboard which elevates attendance by publicly displaying the percentage of students who attained school more than 94% of the time at each corporation and school.
- B. Science of Reading Alignment for Educator Preparation Programs Update – [Presentation](#)
- i. Anna Shults discussed the status of Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) across the state within the higher education space. Before diving in, Ms. Shults described the investment and commitment that the state has received from philanthropic donations, community involvement, and legislative support. Ms. Shults connected the support from stakeholders to the commitments and goals that Indiana hopes to achieve regarding student outcomes. Currently, the department supports teachers through the Indiana Literacy Cadre, running through the generosity of the Lily Foundation and legislative commitments and through science of reading training. For future educators, the department aims to align EPPs with the current goals for student outcomes and streamline the process of student achievement.
 - ii. Regarding legislative commitments, House Enrolled Act (HEA) 1558 (2023) adds the science of reading as a required component of EPPs. Additionally, HEA 1243 (2024) requires EPPs to receive an outside evaluation by a nationally recognized nonpartisan organization that leverages evidence-based approaches on the science of reading.
 - iii. Scott Bogan discussed an update on the review process for EPPs in terms of the science of reading requirement. Mr. Bogan described how one of the key components of the review process per legislation was to ensure that there is a review process that is in partnership with a national entity.
 - iv. Mr. Bogan explained how one of the department's key items was to ensure consistent communication with EPPs. In June of 2023, the department conducted outreach to EPPs following the 2023 legislative process. This outreach included monthly meetings with EPP leaders in the higher education space regarding the science of reading. Mr. Bogan also recognized the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (CHE) and the Independent Colleges of Indiana (ICI) for their assistance and support in this work.

- v. In reviewing the work that has been conducted in other states, such as Florida, Massachusetts, Louisiana, Alabama, and Delaware, Indiana selected Teacher Preparation Inspection-US, Inc. (TPI-US) as the outside entity to evaluate teacher preparation programs across the state. Indiana also consulted the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ).
- vi. EPPs across the state had a full year following the passage of legislation to align their programs with the science of reading and review their plans of study. NCTQ initiated a thorough review process that involved all curriculum and literacy preparation among Indiana's EPP programs. NCTQ's areas of focus include the hours of instruction, objective measures of knowledge, practice opportunities, and background materials.
- vii. Mr. Bogan explained how TPI-US conducted week-long assessments thorough on-site reviews which included in-depth interviews with candidates and student observations. TPI-US's areas of focus for evaluation include course quality, candidate performance, and the quality of program performance management and continuous improvement.
- viii. Indiana's 55 EPPs were divided into four cohorts. Mr. Bogan highlighted that it is not the entire EPP that is reviewed; it is only certain programs that are reviewed within each university, such as early childhood education programs, elementary education program, and special education programs. These programs are reviewed because they are preparing candidates to teach early literacy.
- ix. Mr. Bogan described how NCTQ and TPI-US are in the process of providing reports to Indiana's EPPs. The program status is determined with a weight of 75% for TPI-US (based on its more comprehensive analysis) and a weight of 25% for NCTQ. The four ratings across the evaluation platforms are strong, good, needs improvement, and inadequate. Each EPP receives feedback from both TPI-US and NCTQ on what they are doing well and where they can improve.
- x. Mr. Bogan highlighted that all programs have the opportunity to receive technical assistance from TPI-US. Every program in Cohort 1 took advantage of the technical assistance.
- xi. Of the EPPs reviewed in Cohort 1, seven programs were rated strong, twenty programs were rated good, eight programs were rated needs improvement, and four programs were rated inadequate. The programs rated needs improvement or inadequate have a year to see improvement or their programs will be considered at-risk.
- xii. Overall, nearly 70% of EPPs reviewed during Cohort 1 had a final rating of good or strong. Approximately 7% of programs included content contrary to research on early literacy, per NCTQ's review. The most common areas where programs could improve is in how they prepare teachers to support struggling readers, English learners, and students who speak variations of English.
- xiii. Mr. Bogan described how programs receiving a final rating of needs improvement or inadequate will be placed in a one-year improvement plan. Programs that have not aligned to science of reading will be at risk of losing state accreditation and recognition. IDOE will continue to monitor program status and growth including the state's secondary prep programs. Regular updates will be provided twice annually to the Indiana State Board of Education.
- xiv. Mr. Mapes inquired if EPP tests have questions targeted specifically for the science of reading to make certain that educators are proficient. Mr. Bogan describes how those items are tested in the national assessment, but there are no longer Indiana

specific assessments. Mr. Mapes asked if the department could pull those questions to see what the passing rate is for each university. Dr. Jenner agreed that it would be important data to pull, especially for superintendents and principals when they conduct their hiring processes. Dr. Jenner mentioned that a quality teacher in the classroom makes the largest impact.

- xv. Mr. Durham asked if there were additional supports for programs placed on the one-year improvement plan. Mr. Bogan explained that there is additional technical support from TPI-US which is a three-month condensed opportunity for EPPs to receive additional support. This includes faculty training and on-site visits. Mr. Bogan also discussed resources from the department, specifically resources from the literacy cadre. The Independent Colleges of Indiana are also compiling additional resources to share with their at-risk programs.
- xvi. Dr. Jenner reiterated that improved literacy rates are the result of improved programming for aspiring teachers. Dr. Jenner also discussed the Lily Endowment of \$25 million invested into EPPs across the state.
- xvii. Mr. Bogan commended Ivy Tech for volunteering to be reviewed even though they are technically not an EPP as they prepare many students who then transfer to EPPs at different universities. Dr. Jenner also celebrated Ivy Tech's stackable credential program for elementary training.
- xviii. Dr. Ernest asked about the sustainability of the model, considering the fact that the four programs in Cohort 1 that received lower than a good rating are accredited universities. Dr. Jenner explained the importance of connecting the entire pipeline. Dr. Jenner also mentioned how Indiana has its eye on a few smaller states that are starting to rethink accreditation in the higher education space.

C. Adolescent Literacy – [Presentation](#)

- i. Anna Shults also discussed adolescent literacy for middle school-aged students. The department wants to continue the momentum that the state has seen in elementary literacy rates and build up that pipeline for adolescent students.
- ii. Ms. Shults explained how the national definition of adolescent literacy includes students from fourth to eighth grade, but Indiana will focus on students in grades six through eight. The state is continuing to celebrate the impact of strategic investments in early literacy but is now moving looking at the opportunity to expand literacy focus to help struggling students in sixth through eighth grade.
- iii. In 2024, 1,350 (over 75%) of schools across Indiana opted in to pilot the new ILEARN checkpoints. Approximately 186,000 students in sixth through eighth grade participated in the ELA checkpoints pilot.
- iv. Ms. Shults described how 42% were not reading at grade-level based on Checkpoint 1 and/or 2 Lexile data. Additionally, 31% of all sixth through eighth grade students were not reading at grade level based on summative assessment Lexile data. Ms. Shults discussed how Lexile data allows teachers to really analyze their students' reading data in a productive and individualized manner.
- v. Dr. Jenner described how the national NAPE scores recently released were the lowest scores they've been across the county since 1992. This is something with urgency the state must lean into.
- vi. Ms. Shults explained how there is not a proven nationwide, scalable model for supporting literacy in grades six through eight. Outcomes-based contracting is gaining popularity in education, particularly at the local-level. As Indiana works to urgently move the needle in adolescent literacy, the state will launch a pilot opportunity for schools serving students in grades six through eight using vetted,

approved vendors. This model will safeguard taxpayer dollars by ensuring vendors only get paid when the state sees real results for students. Outcomes-based contracting enables Indiana to contract for specific student outcomes and compels accountability for achieving them.

- vii. Dr. Jenner explained how outcomes-based contracting will encourage vendors to showcase their capabilities and mentioned that Indiana is excited to work with fresh contractors to deliver results for students.
- viii. Ms. Shults explained how the department is going to take responsibility to ensure that school districts are not creating redundancy from one district to the next. The department will do the groundwork of leveraging vendors. IDOE will review vendors that specialize in reading interventions for students in grades six through eight. Schools will then have the option to opt-in to partner with one of these vendors through an outcomes-based contract, which will include specific measurable growth expectations. The priorities will be given to programs that demonstrate alignment to the science of reading, are evidence-based, and are listed in the National Center for Intensive Interventions or the What Works Clearinghouse.
- ix. Dr. Jenner discussed how the ILEARN checkpoints and Lexile levels will be critical in identifying specific measurables that the outcomes-based contracting is designed to help improve. Dr. Jenner also reiterated that this contracting model is optional for school districts. Additionally, Dr. Jenner encouraged public and private donors to consider partnering with the department on this model and encouraged middle school principals to also consider this intervention for their students.
- x. Ms. Shults also described the additional ongoing supports designed to enhance adolescent literacy rates, such as assessment and instructional frameworks, Summer Learning Labs, and HQCM Advisory lists.
- xi. Dr. Ernest asked how the state is able to ensure or predict that the 58% of students who were reading at grade level based on Checkpoint 1 and/or Lexile data continued to do so beyond the summative exam. Ms. Shults explained that checkpoints one and two are based on a group of academic standards, but the state does not measure the exact same skills each time. The point of the checkpoints is to ensure that students are not surprised when they are tested on these skills during the summative exam. Ms. Shults also explained that IREAD is another piece of this puzzle when it comes to second and third graders. For students who do not pass, the department, in conjunction with the school district, will pour in support to help get those students reading at grade-level. Dr. Ernest mentioned how instrumental this data will be for vendors.
- xii. Mr. Bess asked if there was an opportunity to emphasize sixth through eighth grade literacy in Indiana's new accountability model. Mr. Bess also wondered if certain schools choose not to opt-in, but are not supporting their students in other ways, should they be required to opt-in? Overall, as the state starts to look at data results over time, there needs to be some form of intervention for schools that are not improving. Dr. Jenner explained how the state has seen some of the greatest success in the education space through opt-in programs. With immediately required programming, there tends to be friction, but the opt-in model allows the state to move forward by learning lessons through those who volunteered to participate.
- xiii. Dr. Jenner encouraged school districts that have reached the statutorily required 70% proficiency on IREAD to keep pushing forward by supporting teachers and engaging parents.

- xiv. Dr. Jenner also discussed how the opt-in model for IREAD at the second-grade level gradually had an 80% opt-in rate after three years, so it was not disruptive to mandate it for the fourth year. This is the kind of gradual timeline and pace the department is looking to continue with for outcomes-based contracting.

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