



# Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update

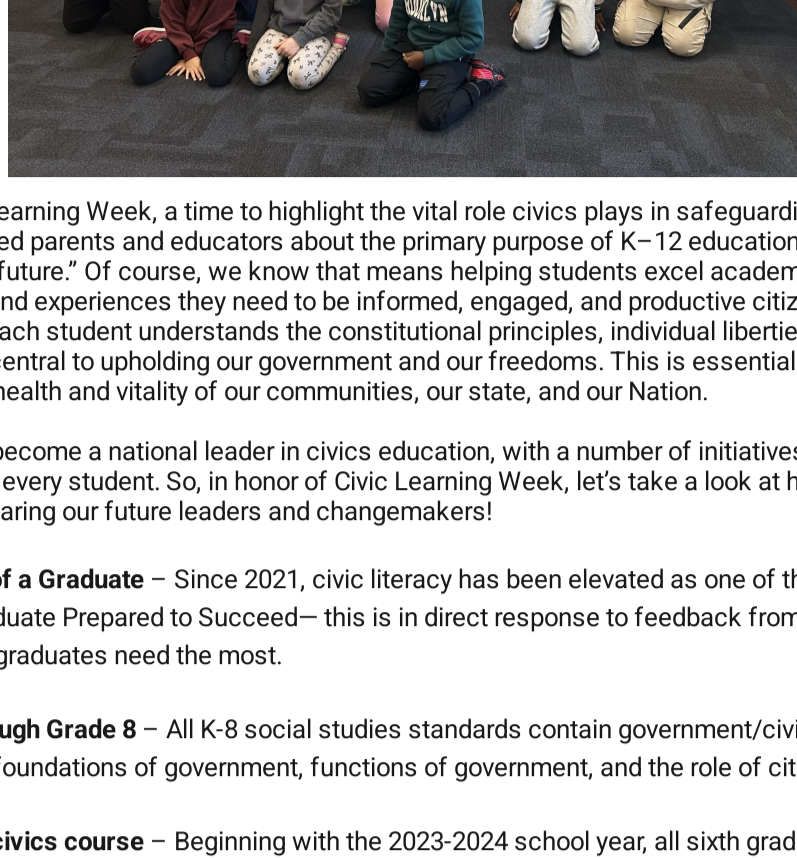
Weekly Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education

March 13, 2026

## A Message from Dr. Katie Jenner

This week is Severe Weather Preparedness Week, a time when many schools across Indiana participate in the statewide tornado drill before the spring storm season begins. Many schools also use this week to teach students about different types of severe weather and what to do both before and during a storm to stay informed and safe. This includes **Gold Academy** in Decatur Township (Indianapolis), where I was able to join Indiana Department of Homeland Security Director Jonathan Whitham on Monday.

Even as we focused on planning and practice with their third grade students, several schools across the state had to quickly shift into response mode over the next two days as late-winter storms moved through Indiana, impacting communities and even some of our school buildings. Thank you for working to keep our students and staff safe and for supporting our families whenever severe weather strikes!



This week is also Civic Learning Week, a time to highlight the vital role civics plays in safeguarding the strength and future of our country. If you asked parents and educators about the primary purpose of K-12 education, most would say, "to prepare students for the future." Of course, we know that means helping students excel academically, and also preparing students with the skills and experiences they need to be informed, engaged, and productive citizens. Strong civics education ensures that each student understands the constitutional principles, individual liberties, and personal responsibilities that are central to upholding our government and our freedoms. This is essential to the success of every graduate, as well as the health and vitality of our communities, our state, and our Nation.

This is why Indiana has become a national leader in civics education, with a number of initiatives in recent years to promote civic literacy for every student. So, in honor of Civic Learning Week, let's take a look at how educators and schools across the state are preparing our future leaders and changemakers!

- **Indiana's Profile of a Graduate** – Since 2021, civic literacy has been elevated as one of the five key characteristics of an Indiana Graduate Prepared to Succeed—this is in direct response to feedback from Hoosiers across the state about what graduates need the most.
- **Kindergarten through Grade 8** – All K-8 social studies standards contain government/civics standards, including an emphasis on the foundations of government, functions of government, and the role of citizens.
- **New sixth grade civics course** – Beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, all sixth grade students are required to take a civics course.
- **New Indiana diploma and readiness seals** – Indiana's new diploma, which is currently being implemented in a number of schools statewide and is effective for all students beginning with the class of 2029, requires every student to take U.S. History and U.S. Government as part of the basic diploma requirements.
- **New school accountability model** – Just last week, the Indiana State Board of Education unanimously approved a new A-F accountability model, which values when students demonstrate a strong understanding of civics and government on the ILEARN U.S. Government End-of-Course Assessment (this assessment is optional per statute). This new model also goes further than any prior iteration of the state's school accountability model to incorporate social studies in grades 4-6, thus ensuring more students have a robust understanding of civics and government.
- **Looking ahead** – For students who choose to continue their education beyond K-12, our state's public higher education partners also play an essential role in equipping students for successful, rewarding careers, as well as preparing students to be good citizens. Moving forward, we will launch a comprehensive exploration to identify how we can best measure civic literacy in both K-12 and higher education.

As we think about how we can best prepare students for life after high school, civic literacy is one of a range of skills every student needs to realize their full potential. Thank you to the Indiana Bar Foundation, as well as the Benjamin Harrison Presidential Site, for their continued partnership and advocacy in this area, and thank you for the role you play in empowering students through civic learning and strengthening our Nation through education. As always, thank you for all that you do for Indiana students.

## Office of Assessment

**REMINDER: 2025-2026 Petition to Seek Performance-Based State Accreditation Submission Window**  
The submission window for non-public schools to submit a [petition for performance-based state accreditation](#) will close on Tuesday, March 31. Petitions must be completed and submitted to the Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) prior to the school year for which accreditation would begin. Schools are encouraged to submit a [Notice of Intent](#) form to alert IDOE of their intent to submit a petition. To submit the notice and petition, or for questions, contact IDOE's [Office of Accountability](#).

## Office of Assessment

**NEW: SAT School Day 2026 Data Analysis Workshops**  
This interactive in-person session, hosted by IDOE and College Board, focuses on helping schools access and use their Spring 2026 SAT School Day data effectively. Participants will explore the purpose of each report, learn how to disaggregate results, and connect student performance bands to targeted skill instruction and the new performance level descriptors (PLDs). Designed for administrators, counselors, and other school leaders, the session supports team-based data review and planning for the 2026-2027 school year. Schools and corporations are encouraged to attend as a team to maximize the value of the data and resources shared.

Workshop dates and locations:

- Thursday, April 16 | Virtual | [Register here](#).
- Monday, April 20 | Sellersburg – Ivy Tech | [Register here](#).
- Tuesday, April 21 | Jasper – Southern Indiana Education Center | [Register here](#).
- Wednesday, April 22 | Indianapolis – Central Indiana Education Services Center | [Register here](#).
- Thursday, April 23 | Fort Wayne – Southwest Allen County Schools | [Register here](#).
- Friday, April 24 | Westville – Purdue University Northwest | [Register here](#).

For questions, contact [Kris McAloon](#).

**NEW: Universal Mathematics Screener Grades K-2 Frequently Asked Questions**  
Corporations and non-public schools can refer to the [2026-2027 Universal Mathematics Screener for Grades K-2 Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) to confirm answers to commonly asked questions about Indiana State Board of Education-approved mathematics screeners. The FAQ will continue to be updated as new information becomes available. Contact IDOE's [Office of Assessment](#) with any questions.

**REMINDER: 2026-2027 Formative (Interim) Assessment Grant Approved Assessments**  
The Indiana State Board of Education approved assessment programs, specific universal reading screeners, and two preferred universal mathematics screeners for kindergarten through grade two for use with the 2026-2027 Formative (Interim) Assessment Grant. The application and accompanying guidance for requesting and using formative assessment grant funds will become available in the spring. Schools can now access the approved assessments [memo](#) on the [Formative \(Interim\) Assessment Grant DOE webpage](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Assessment](#) with any questions.

## Office of Curriculum and Instruction, Digital Learning, and Kindergarten Readiness

**NEW: K-8 Mathematics Tiered System of Supports Informational Webinar Series**  
IDOE's Office of Curriculum and Instruction will introduce and host a live webinar to support local implementation of K-8 mathematics tiered instruction. We will dive deeper into Indiana's Tiered System of Supports for K-8 Mathematics Toolkit, share additional resources, discuss legislative updates regarding local implementation of tiered mathematics intervention plans, and then open the floor for participant questions. The webinar will take place at 3 p.m. ET on Monday, March 23. Use this [link](#) to register. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

**NEW: Fall 2026 Early Learning Assessment System Opt-In – Indiana Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (IKRA) and ISPROUT**  
As part of Indiana's system to measure and support kindergarten readiness, Indiana's IKRA will be available to all public, charter, and non-public schools as an opt-in assessment for kindergarten students in fall 2026. The [IKRA opt-in window is now open](#) through Friday, May 15. The [ISPROUT opt-in window for students ages three through five](#) is also open for fall 2026. ISPROUT will continue to be required for children in special education, as well as children utilizing On My Way Pre-K funding. Administering ISPROUT is also required for all programs receiving High-Quality Curricular Materials Grant funding in 2025, however, any program serving children ages three through five is able to opt-in. If you participated in the IKRA or ISPROUT previously, you must still complete an opt-in form for 2026-2027. Contact IDOE's [Office of Assessment](#) with any questions.

**REMINDER: Implementing Advanced Middle School Mathematics**  
IDOE created this [implementation guide](#) to support middle schools in implementing automatic enrollment in advanced mathematics courses. This guide provides administrators and school leaders with a structured resource for planning and decision-making. It helps evaluate local conditions, explore feasible models, and design systems that ensure high-quality advanced math experiences for students. The guide also serves as a shared reference for administrators, counselors, and teachers to align on advanced math goals within a school corporation. Questions and models included are offered as considerations, not requirements. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

## Office of Educator Talent and Literacy Center

**NEW: The Literacy Leadership Series Workshop, "Reading Leadership That Drives Results"**  
Join IDOE for the next Literacy Leadership Series workshop, "Reading Leadership That Drives Results," from 2 to 3 p.m. ET on Tuesday, March 17, with Dr. Sarah Brown. Continuing through April, the IDOE Literacy Leadership Series is a high-impact series specially designed for district and school leaders, school board members, instructional coaches, and literacy specialists. The live, on-demand virtual series in the Indiana Learning Lab will feature national reading science and systems design experts and showcase critical research, guidance, and resources to support practice toward evidence-based literacy instruction and building comprehensive literacy support systems for improving student outcomes. Access the [series flyer](#) for more information regarding topics and dates. Contact the [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

**NEW: Science of Reading Experts Explain Series**  
Join IDOE and The Reading League Indiana from noon to 1 p.m. ET on Tuesday, March 17, for the next live Experts Explain series with Dr. Linda Cavazos. Dr. Cavazos will present "Writing and Oral Language." In this session, participants will review prewriting strategies that help English learners improve their writing skills. We will examine student writing samples to see how language and reading gaps can lead to writing difficulties. Guidance will be offered on linguistic and academic supports to assist English learners' writing development. All sessions will be recorded and shared in the Indiana Learning Lab. See registration details [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

## Office of School and Community Nutrition

**NEW: School Food Service Survey**  
Some food dyes and additives have been linked to potential health concerns in children, such as behavioral issues, hyperactivity, and inattention. As Indiana continues to prioritize the health and safety of all Hoosier students, IDOE is seeking feedback from school food service directors, which will inform a landscape analysis on the prevalence of food additives and/or dyes in school meals. School food service directors are encouraged to complete this [Jotform](#) by Friday, April 3.

## Office of School Finance

**REMINDER: Membership Conflict Petition Process**  
Today, Friday, March 13, is the deadline for a school corporation or charter school to file a membership conflict petition. This [memo](#) details the process. Contact IDOE's [Office of School Finance](#) with any questions.

**REMINDER: Estimated Average Daily Membership (ADM) Data Requested**  
The window to submit estimated ADM data for fiscal year (FY) 2027 is open through Friday, March 27. View this [memo](#) for additional details on how to submit this data. Contact IDOE's [Office of School Finance](#) with any questions.

**REMINDER: Fiscal Year (FY) 2027 Indirect Cost Rates Application Information**  
The window to apply for Indirect Cost Rates is open until Tuesday, March 31. Restricted and unrestricted indirect costs rates are calculated and certified only to entities that provide Form 9 financial information. New Form 9-reporting schools are eligible to apply, but will be subject to the median rate. Please see this [memo](#) for more information. Questions can be sent to [icr@doe.in.gov](#).

**REMINDER: Common School Loans**  
IDOE's Office of School Finance will accept applications for construction and technology common school loans from corporations, charter schools, and school corporation career and technical education schools through Monday, April 6. Petitions must be submitted to IDOE by this date to be considered. The application and other details can be found in the [Public School Finance Community in Moodle](#) under Common School Funds -- Spring. Contact IDOE's [Office of School Finance](#) with any questions.

## Office of Student Pathways and Opportunities

**REMINDER: Alternative Education New Program Proposal Submissions for the 2026-2027 School Year**  
The submission window is currently open for new alternative education program proposals for the 2026-2027 school year for schools that do not currently have an approved alternative education program. The submission window closes on Tuesday, March 31. The proposal link can be found [here](#), under Documents and Resources. Currently approved alternative education programs that wish to establish a new alternative education program should consult with IDOE's Alternative Education team for guidance. Contact IDOE's [Alternative Education team](#) with any questions.

## Office of School Support & Transformation

**NEW: Next Generation School Improvement Grant (Next Gen SIG)**  
Applications for the Next Generation School Improvement Grant are now open. This is a competitive, multi-year, multi-million-dollar grant and must include a well-developed vision and intentional strategic plan to innovate or transform the educational experience for your students and community. Eligibility for this grant extends to all schools currently identified as CSI and TSI under Indiana's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. The following [link](#) includes more information about the grant program, a list of eligible schools, a PDF version of the application, as well as the scoring rubric. IDOE's Office of School Support and Transformation will be accepting applications through Friday, May 29. The live online application will be available in the coming weeks. Contact [Georgia Watson](#) with any questions.

**REMINDER: Annual 1003 Flexibility Waivers**  
IDOE's Office of School Support and Transformation is [accepting applications](#) for 1003 Flexibility Waivers to support improved student outcomes, operational efficiency, and innovative learning. Details are available in this [memo](#) and [Flexibility Guide for Indiana's K-12 Schools](#). Applications are open on a rolling basis through Friday, April 24, and will be considered at SBOE meetings through July. Contact [Georgia Watson](#) with any questions.

## Office of Student, School, and Family Engagement

**NEW: Military Compact 101 Training**  
IDOE is offering a Compact 101 Training for school counselors and/or student service professionals on Wednesday, April 8, at 12 p.m. ET. This session highlights why it is especially critical to understand and support military-connected students whose families are not located near a military base. Without access to on-base resources, these students often rely heavily on their schools for stability, consistency, and knowledge of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children. Counselors who complete the training and accompanying quiz will receive a certificate of completion, which may be used for Purple Star School applications and/or PGP points. Click [here](#) for more information, and click [here](#) to register. Contact [Rebekah Frazer](#) with any questions.

## Office of Special Education, English Learning, and Migrant Education

**NEW: Early Childhood Special Education Directory Office Hour**  
IDOE's Office of Special Education will host an open office hour on Thursday, March 19, from 2 to 3 p.m. ET to review the Early Childhood Special Education Directory. Join to view the tool in action and ask questions. Join the office hour [here](#), and email [specialeducation@dos.in.gov](#) with any questions.

**NEW: Maintenance of Effort (MOE) for Part B Funding**  
The window to submit Year 5 Compliance and Year 6 Eligibility for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B Fiscal Year 2027 funding is now open. MOE workbooks are due within the [grant management system](#) by Friday, March 27. Local educational agencies (LEAs) without an approved MOE should contact their assigned fiscal specialist before completing their workbook. New charters that have not received an MOE workbook will receive a workbook via email with a different due date. December 1, 2024, child counts are available in the Office of Special Education Moodle Community (i.e., Fiscal -- Part B Grants for Special Education -- FY26 Grant Information -- Maintenance of Effort -- Year 5). LEAs with questions should contact their fiscal specialist.

**NEW: Education Benefit Review Pilot Grant Recipients**  
IDOE's Office of Special Education is pleased to announce the 15 recipients of the 2026-2027 Education Benefit Review Pilot Grant. The Education Benefit Review is a structured, in-depth examination of the supports and services provided to students with disabilities. This process is designed to ensure that each student receives a free, appropriate public education, as required under federal law. Through this pilot, participating districts will engage in a comprehensive review that strengthens decision-making, improves service delivery, and promotes meaningful educational outcomes for students with disabilities. The list of recipients can be found [here](#).

**REMINDER: 2026 Special Education Director Outreach Opportunities**  
The IDOE Office of Special Education is offering multiple support opportunities for Indiana special education directors and administrators in 2026. Join the March sessions to learn more about early childhood placement, 1% cap waiver updates and alternate assessment participation guidance, braille orders/returns, and discipline data.

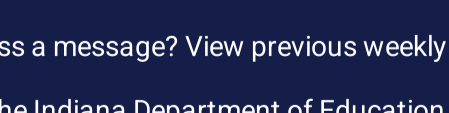
- The [Directors Symposium](#) is held monthly to provide relevant policy and resource updates that support directors in strengthening compliance in their corporation's reporting.
- [Lead and Listen](#) sessions enable IDOE to address [submitted follow-up questions](#) regarding the Directors Symposium.
- [New Director Community Chats](#) are also held monthly for special education directors and administrators, new to their positions within the last three years, to ask questions and gain additional information following the Directors Symposium.

Specific information, including dates, times, and registration information, can be found [here](#). Please direct any questions about director outreach opportunities to [spedassistance@doe.in.gov](#).

## News From Our Partners

**NEW FROM THE INDIANA BAR FOUNDATION AND ICIVICS: Indiana Civics Summit and Educator Convening on Thursday, April 9**

This one-day conference brings together educators and leaders from across the state to explore Indiana's civic health, America's 250th anniversary, and themes of civility and youth engagement. This year's summit will also feature the Civics Educator Convening, a dedicated learning track designed with classroom impact in mind. To support educator participation, iCivics will cover registration costs for a limited number of K-12 educators. If you are an educator, use code CIVCS26 for free registration. This is limited to the first 75 educators who register for the event. In addition, all K-12 educators traveling to attend are eligible for a travel stipend. Full details and eligibility information can be found on the event registration webpage. Tickets are \$50, with discounts available for educators, and include breakfast and lunch. Seating is limited to the first 200 registrants, so register early as registration closes on Thursday, April 2. Click [here](#) to register and learn more.



## Weekly Updates

View previous weekly updates from Dr. Katie Jenner [here](#).

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Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update from the Indiana Department of Education is distributed every Friday morning.

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