



Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update

Weekly Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education

September 18, 2026

A Message from Dr. Katie Jenner

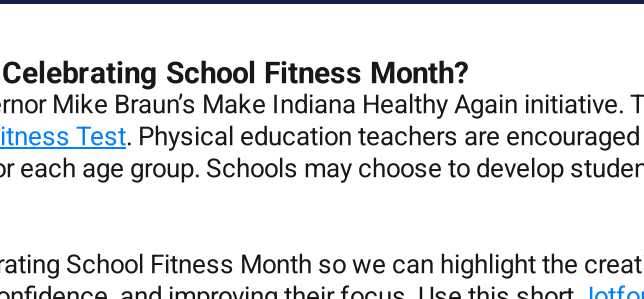
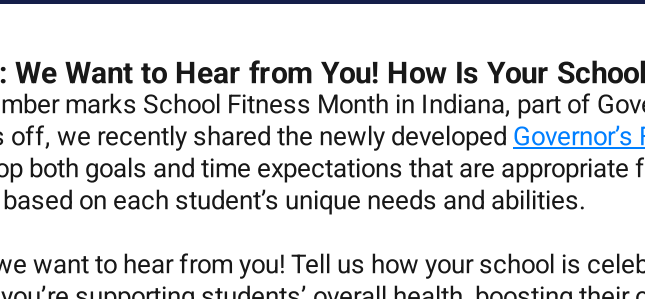
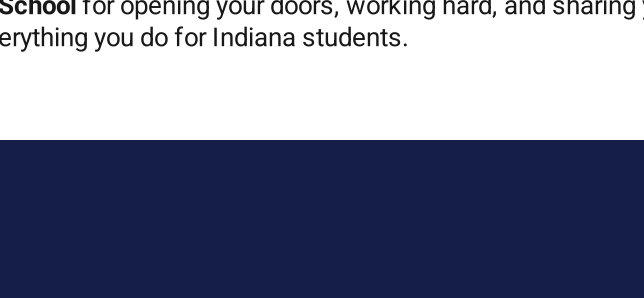
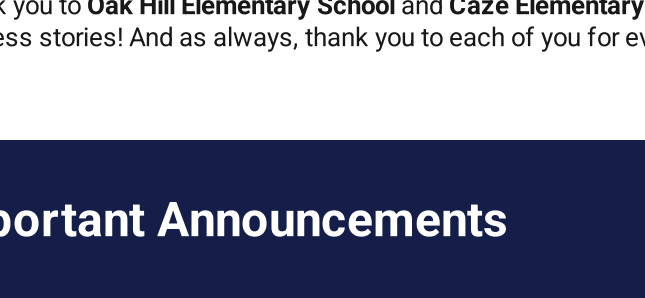
It has been an exciting week in education, as we officially named our 2027 Indiana Teacher of the Year on Wednesday! To keep the celebration going, we'll share a video and photos from the big surprise in next week's newsletter. Today, I hope you'll join us in extending a HUGE congratulations to **Mr. Jason Witzgreuter**, Associate Director of Bands at Homestead High School in Fort Wayne—and our 2027 Indiana Teacher of the Year!

Before we highlight one of our recent school visits, which is the focus of today's message, I also want to give a shoutout to Penn High School, which was recently highlighted on an NBC Nightly News segment featuring uplifting stories from across the country. The short clip includes scenes from the first home football game, where seniors give a special welcome to incoming kindergartners. Check out the segment [here!](#)

Shortly after we shared the incredible news of statewide literacy rates **increasing for the fifth consecutive year**, we had the opportunity to visit and meet with educators and students at two southern Indiana elementary schools, alongside Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation Superintendent **Dr. Darla K. Hoover** and State Board of Education Member **B.J. Watts**.

Our first stop was **Oak Hill Elementary School**, where staff and students were excited to celebrate their third graders' **100% pass rate on the 2026 IREAD**, exceeding the state's 95% goal for three consecutive years! Principal **Shannon Strieter** credits this success to consistently doing the small things well and having a building-wide commitment to literacy—a commitment that will continue – with the help of Reading Specialist **Allison Allen** – as they work to sustain their momentum. She also emphasized the importance of teacher input and how school leaders meet regularly with teachers to review progress and identify opportunities for continuous improvement.

We also visited **Mrs. Rueger's** first grade class, where students were eager to share their favorite parts of the school day. Their answers ranged from gym to art, with one enthusiastic learner saying "everything!"



Our second stop of the day was **Caze Elementary School**, where you could immediately feel the school pride, energy, and excitement. Principal **Kendra Renfrow** and Assistant Principal **Liz Joyce** highlighted their school's impressive progress on IREAD, jumping nearly 15 percentage points from last year and reaching a **96.8% pass rate in 2026!** In preparation for the IREAD assessment, they had about a dozen teachers helping students during certified reading time, including Reading Specialist **Bailey Plummer**.

We got to see some of this work in action as we visited several classrooms, including **Mrs. Driver's** class, where students were practicing Think-Pair-Share and working collaboratively to answer questions about their reading assignment. As participants in the Indiana Literacy Cadre, Caze Elementary has focused on building a schoolwide understanding of effective instructional strategies and closely monitoring their data every week.

Thank you to **Oak Hill Elementary School** and **Caze Elementary School** for opening your doors, working hard, and sharing your success stories! And as always, thank you to each of you for everything you do for Indiana students.

Important Announcements

NEW: We Want to Hear from You! How Is Your School Celebrating School Fitness Month?

September marks School Fitness Month in Indiana, part of Governor Mike Braun's Make Indiana Healthy Again initiative. To kick things off, we recently shared the newly developed [Governor's Fitness Test](#). Physical education teachers are encouraged to develop both goals and time expectations that are appropriate for each age group. Schools may choose to develop student-level goals based on each student's unique needs and abilities.

Now we want to hear from you! Tell us how your school is celebrating School Fitness Month so we can highlight the creative ways you're supporting students' overall health, boosting their confidence, and improving their focus. Use this [short Loforum](#) to share your activities!

Office of Assessment

NEW: ISPROUT Panelist Discussion

Hoosier educators and administrators will serve as panelists for an informational ISPROUT webinar on Tuesday, September 29, from 12 to 1 p.m. ET. Panelists will share practical strategies for aligning instructional planning with Skills, Knowledge, and Behavior (SKBs), integrating data to support meaningful team discussions, and applying effective observation techniques. Participants will learn how to seamlessly embed ISPROUT into daily curriculum routines, group SKBs to design efficient lessons, make the most of ISPROUT-provided lessons and observation sheets, as well as share ISPROUT data with families effectively. Click [here](#) to register. Contact the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE's) [Office of Assessment](#) with questions.

NEW: Early Learning Assessment Office Hours Wednesday, September 23

Office hours for ISPROUT and Indiana Kindergarten Readiness Assessment (IKRA) will be held on Wednesday, September 23, from 3 to 4 p.m. ET. Topics will include back to school reminders, assessment and reporting activities, and the opportunity for participants to ask questions. Click [here](#) to register. Contact IDOE's [Office of Assessment](#) with any questions.

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

REMINDER: Updated Work-Based Learning (WBL) Menu of Experiences

The WBL Menu of Experiences resource released in August 2025 has been updated and the new version can be found [here](#). This resource provides a summary of different types of WBL experiences available to students and aligned to Indiana's new diploma and readiness seals. The menu includes links to examples of highlighted WBL experiences currently available to students across the state. It also includes guidance on the approved WBL definition to help stakeholders understand the key elements necessary for a WBL experience to count towards one of the readiness seals. The updated version also incorporates several enhancements based on feedback from stakeholders, including additional guidance on reporting WBL experiences. Contact CTE@che.in.gov with any questions.

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

NEW: IDOE Professional Development Session - Interdisciplinary Data Science Skills in Computer Science (CS)

The next session in the ongoing series "Teach CS and Artificial Intelligence (AI) with IDOE" will take place on Thursday, September 24, at 3 p.m. ET. Data science is a growing field and data skills are highlighted across the Indiana Academic Standards (IAS) in math, science, and CS. Join IDOE's CS specialist to learn about the overlap between CS, math, and science data standards, receive lessons and resources for teaching data skills, and understand essential data skills taught in the course NLP5 4565: Computing Foundations for a Digital Age. Sign up for the workshop [here](#). Previous sessions from the series are available [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Curriculum and Instruction team](#) with any questions.

NEW: Mathematics Language Routines for Everyone

IDOE will welcome expert educator Ella Herreth on Wednesday, September 30, from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. ET for a live webinar focused on the role of language in mathematics instruction. This session will highlight strategies for engaging all learners in meaningful mathematical discourse, emphasizing the use of precise academic vocabulary and routines that help students make sense of content and reflect on key terminology. Designed for middle school math teachers and leaders, this webinar will feature instructional routines that are beneficial for students from kindergarten through high school. Register [here](#) through the Indiana Learning Lab. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

Office of Educational Options and Quality

REMINDER: Choice Regional Meetings in September

September marks the first regional meetings of the school year. In this first meeting, we will discuss data reporting requirements, the payment process, and the new Choice School Performance Framework. Regional meetings will be hosted around the state at participating Choice schools. All regional meetings will begin promptly at 9 a.m. local time and each meeting site will cover the same agenda. To register for one of the regional meetings, please follow this [link](#) to our JoForm.

Locations and Dates:

- Wednesday, September 23 – Fort Wayne
- Wednesday, September 23 – Crown Point
- Thursday, September 24 – Lafayette
- Wednesday, September 30 – Evansville

REMINDER: Choice Scholarship Fall Payments

To be eligible to receive a student payment in the second fall payment, every student is required to have Membership and Enrollment data certified by Friday, October 9, and a signed Parent and School Signature form uploaded by Monday, October 19. Any student missed in the first fall payment will be paid in the second fall payment as long as the required data is reported for the student in Data Exchange by Thursday, October 1, (census date) and the Parent and School Signature form is uploaded to the Choice Scholarship Student Application tile by the Monday, October 19 deadline.

Upon approval of the Choice Scholarship application, the Parent and School Signature form can be found on the second page of a student's estimated award letter in the Choice Scholarship Student Application tile. The Parent and School Signature form is available as soon as the student's application is submitted and approved. The link to upload the form is available in the student application and will remain open through Monday, October 19.

Payment letters will be published to the Choice school's Google folder with an Excel file breakdown of their payment installments. Any discrepancies must be reported to IDOE's Office of Educational Options and Quality at choiceschool@doe.in.gov within two weeks from the date of the letter. Appeals will be reviewed by the Choice team for October payment only. No appeals will be accepted for the September payment and those accounts will be reconciled in the October payment. Further details on the appeal process will be provided closer to the October payment disbursement date.

Office of Educator Talent and Literacy

NEW: Science of Reading Experts Explain Series

Join IDOE and The Reading League Indiana from 12 to 1 p.m. ET on Tuesday, September 22, for the live Experts Explain series with Dr. Stephanie Stollar and her presentation, "Tiered Supports, Literacy Leadership, and the Instructional Hierarchy." In this session, Dr. Stollar will introduce the instructional hierarchy as a schema for making decisions about effective instruction in a tiered systems and support framework for literacy improvement. Topics include the key components of tiered supports, the importance of data-based decision making, and the use of assessment to determine if students need more instruction or more practice. All sessions will be recorded and shared in the Indiana Learning Lab. See registration details [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

NEW: Universal Reading Screener Upcoming September Office Hours

Join Acadience and IDOE's Literacy Center for Acadience Office Hours, where platform managers, coaches, teachers, school leaders, and others involved in screening can connect to ask questions and receive support. All sessions will be recorded, and links will be made available for future viewing. Join for ["AIQ Navigation Overview"](#) on Wednesday, September 30, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET. Additionally, the first two webinars for the new [Acadience Kindergarten-Grade Six Reading Data-Driven Literacy Instruction](#) collection are available in the Learning Lab. These sessions are part of a five-part series that offer deeper guidance on using Acadience data to drive instruction. Contact IDOE's [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

Office of School Finance

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 Friday, October 16. 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, then under Fall. Contact IDOE's [Office of School Finance](#) with any questions.

Office of School Health

REMINDER: School Nurses Resources

Please share the below resources with your school nurse.

[IDOE School Health Webpage](#)

- A school nurse's first stop for essential information, including instructions for creating a Moodle account, how to register to receive the school nurse newsletters and announcements, as well as information about bloodborne pathogens, concussions, health laws, vision and hearing screening guidelines, reports, stock emergency medications, and sudden cardiac arrest.

[IDOE Moodle Education Platform](#)

- Provides online courses developed specifically for school nurses (RNs).
- The School Nurse Community - contains folders filled with links and documents on specific school nurse topics, such as chronic diseases (asthma, diabetes, seizures, severe allergies, etc.), creating IHPs, delegation, FERPA, stock emergency medications, sample policies and forms, oxygen, service animals, school nurse evaluation tools, private duty nurses, the Indiana School Nurse Manual, and more.
- An account is needed. Instructions for creating an account can be found [here](#).

[Vision and Hearing Screenings](#)

- Visual acuity screenings are required for traditional public and charter schools with students in kindergarten or grades one, three, five, and eight. Procedures for completing these screenings can be found in the Indiana Vision Screening Guidelines.
- Modified Clinical Technique (MCT) screenings conducted by an optometrist or ophthalmologist are required for traditional public and charter schools with students in kindergarten or grade one. Information about the MCT screening can be found [here](#).
- Hearing screenings are required for public and charter schools with students in grades one, four, seven, and 10. Procedures for completing these screenings can be found in the Indiana Hearing Screening Guidelines.
- Schools are highly encouraged to complete the vision and hearing screenings in the fall.

[Indiana Association of School Nurses Annual Fall Conference](#)

- This conference is specifically intended for school nurses, with speakers and content targeted to the most pressing issues in school nursing. It will be held on Monday, November 9, at Tuesday, November 10 at the Embassy Suites and Conference Center in Noblesville. For more information and to register, please click [here](#).

Office of School Support and Transformation

NEW: Recipients of Next Generation School Improvement Grant, Cohort 6 Announced

IDOE's Office of School Support and Transformation is pleased to announce the recipients of the Next Generation School Improvement Grant, Cohort 6, a federally funded initiative to transform educational opportunities in schools identified for additional support under Indiana's approved Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. Grant recipients will receive one year's worth of planning funds followed by funding for three years of implementation. More information can be found [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of School Support and Transformation](#) with any questions.

Office of Special Education, English Learning, and Migrant Education

NEW: Certificate of Multilingual Proficiency (CoMP) Informational Meeting

Indiana's Certificate of Multilingual Proficiency (CoMP) certifies secondary multilingual students by validating their fluency across multiple languages. To learn more about this certificate, join IDOE's English Learner (EL) team for an informational webinar on Wednesday, October 14, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. ET. Participation, implementation, and guidance updates will be discussed. No registration is required, and the access link can be found on the [Indiana EL Professional Development \(PD\) Opportunities Calendar](#). More information can be found on IDOE's [CoMP webpage](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Multilingual Education](#) with any questions.

NEW: 2026-2028 Title III Application Deadline Reminder

Local education agencies (LEAs) received the 2026-2028 Title III grant [application link](#), instructions to apply, and additional Euna Grants support resources on Monday, August 18. The [Title III Grants Euna Guidance](#) resource is available to walk users through the application process. Submissions are due Wednesday, September 30. Contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Multilingual Education](#) with any questions.

NEW: EL Essentials Professional Learning Community (PLC) on Tuesday, September 22

Directors and leaders of EL programs are invited to join IDOE in an ongoing PLC during the 2026-2027 school year. This PLC provides a space to connect with colleagues across the state, access timely program information, and bring questions. The first session of the year, Navigating IDOE EL Platforms and the state, Resources, implementation, and guidance updates will be held Tuesday, September 22, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. ET. This meeting will offer a deep dive into where EL-related data and tools live within IDOE systems. Participants will explore key EL platforms including Ed-ID, EdData, and additional EL resources to strengthen local data practices and support accurate reporting and programming. The meeting link and additional details can be found on the [IDOE EL PD Opportunities Calendar](#). For questions, please contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Multilingual Education](#).

NEW: RoboKind Office Hours Monday, September 21

Invoices for the 2026-2027 RoboKind grant will be processed through EUNA, the state's grant management system. Special education directors and fiscal staff responsible for submitting invoices are encouraged to attend this 60-minute session that will provide guidance on the invoicing process and an opportunity to ask questions. The [RoboKind Office Hours session](#) is scheduled from 1 to 2 p.m. ET on Monday, September 21.

If you do not have an account with Euna Grants, please use this [link](#) to set up an account. For assistance with the account setup, please submit a support request [here](#).

NEW: Early Childhood Community of Practice

The next Early Childhood Special Education Community of Practice will take place on Thursday, October 15, from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET. Join IDOE's Office of Special Education to review First Steps Transition practices and learn about upcoming changes in PowerSchool Special Programs (PSPS) related to Transition Conferences. Join the event [here](#) and contact specialeducation@doe.in.gov with any questions.

NEW: Upcoming Director Foundations Session

Special education directors are invited to attend the next installment of the Director Foundations webinar series, happening from 12 to 1 p.m. ET on Tuesday, September 22. In this virtual [Microsoft Teams](#) session, local special education directors will share information about general supervision reviews. Participants will have the chance to ask questions live. Refer to the [Special Director Outreach Opportunities flyer](#) for more information and reach out to spedassistance@doe.in.gov with any questions.

NEW: Special Education Directors - Parent Survey Data Access Update

All Special Education Directors currently have access to request Parent Survey data using this [Parent Survey Data Request](#). The data shared will not include any personally identifiable information (PII). Instead, LEAs will receive a numerical breakdown of responses to each survey question. Survey data will be provided through a shared Google Sheet, with individual tabs for each LEA associated with the email address submitted. The data is a snapshot from the moment the request is submitted. Data will also be shared once per quarter to all users on the access list. If a director would like additional staff members to receive access, please complete the [Parent Survey User Access Request](#). Any emails submitted will be added to the user access list.

REMINDER: Multilingual Learner Report and English Learner (EL) Counts Captured on Thursday, October 1
The Multilingual Learner Report in Data Exchange (IDEX-LM) collects information on students with a home language other than English, determines the enrollment count of identified EL students, and generates funding for schools via the federal Title III grant and the state Non-English Speaking Program (NESP). Any students with errors or exclusions will not be certified and included in the finalized Multilingual Learner Report. To review students not currently certified, navigate to the Validate tab in Data Exchange and click on the "Multilingual Learners" hyperlink. This report details each error or exclusion by STN and can be exported for further organization. If there is any discrepancy between the information shown in the Data Exchange Validation portal and your Student Information System (SIS), please contact your SIS vendor directly or submit a help ticket [here](#).

REMINDER: New Preschool Coordinator Webinar

A [recording](#) of the New Preschool Coordinator webinar is now available. This resource covers essential content for Preschool Coordinators, Special Education Directors, Early Learning Center Directors, First Steps Service Coordinators, Diagnosticians, Special Education Teachers, and General Education Teachers. Thank you to all attendees for both the New Preschool Coordinator Webinar and First Steps Transition Roadshow for their attendance, engagement, and questions. For any questions, please contact specialeducation@doe.in.gov.

Office of Title Grants and Support

REMINDER: School (SY) 2025-2026 Self-Assessment

The Self-Assessment for SY 2025-2026 is now open for completion. Participation in the Self-Assessment is required for all LEAs receiving federal funds, and completing it in time helps ensure federal funding continues without interruption. Submissions are due by Friday, September 25. Additional information on the Self-Assessment can be found on the Federal Monitoring Moodle Course via the Self-Assessment Technical Appendix. An official memorandum including the submission link has been sent to LEA designated contacts.

Questions can also be sent to federalmonitoring@doe.in.gov.

Note: LEAs selected for additional monitoring, desktop or onsite, will be made aware via a formal memo at a separate time.

REMINDER: Federal Programs Quarterly Meeting

Join IDOE's Title Grants and Support Team from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. ET on Thursday, September 24, for our first quarterly meeting. The session will share information regarding federal program updates. Attendees can register [here](#), as there will not be a regular meeting link. The session will be recorded and shared in the Learning Lab. Contact Title@doe.in.gov with any questions.

News from Our Partners

NEW FROM THE INDIANA CAREER APPRENTICESHIP PATHWAY (INCAP): School Counselor Toolkit

INCAP is a new education and training pathway that combines classroom learning and paid on-the-job training to prepare Hoosiers for in-demand careers. To help schools better understand and implement INCAP, you can find an all-new robust online toolkit, which includes details on offering INCAP to your students, information about 2027-2028 apprenticeship opportunities, sample journeys that demonstrate how students move through their program, and example schedules with course codes and diploma seal requirements. Find the school toolkit [here](#). Have questions about INCAP? Reach out to your regional INCAP Connector [here](#).

NEW FROM BLUE STAR FAMILIES: Blue Star Welcome Week

Indiana is home to more than 100 Purple Star Schools, recognized for their deep commitment to supporting students and families connected to our nation's military. Each year, roughly 600,000 military families relocate nationwide, and for those with school-aged children, these frequent moves can be especially challenging. Blue Star Welcome Week, held September 26, through October 4, is a nationwide effort to help military families feel connected and supported as they settle into new communities. With many transitions happening over the summer, this week is a special opportunity for Indiana schools to extend a warm welcome to every local military family, whether through local events, thoughtful messages, or small gestures that show military families they're valued and appreciated. This [toolkit](#) from Blue Star Families is designed to help you get started. Learn more about how you can get involved at bluestarwelcomeweek.org.

NEW FROM THE ATLAS PROJECT: ATLAS Answers

The ATLAS Project team hosts the monthly [ATLAS Answers](#), which brings Indiana educators information pertaining to various areas of assistive technology (AT). In this month's session, Lindsay Wells explores AT tools that support students with visual impairments. Learn about low-, mid-, and high-tech solutions, simple classroom modifications, and how educators can borrow equipment from the free ATLAS Equipment Lending Library to find the right tools for their students. Contact KT21ATLAS@eastersealscrossroads.org for more information.

NEW FROM THE LEAD IDEA CENTER: Supporting Behavior of Students with Disabilities - Creating Conditions for Success Webinar

Learning Block 4 of the Lead IDEA Center's Solution-Based Learning Series helps pre-kindergarten to grade 12 school building administrators, and those who prepare and support them, build systems that promote positive student behavior through prevention, effective services and supports, and data-based decision-making. Learn more on the [Lead IDEA website](#) and register by Wednesday, November 25. [Registration](#) is free and now open.

NEW FROM NASA: NASA TechRise Student Challenge

Grades six to 12 educators and students affiliated with U.S. schools are invited to enter the NASA TechRise Student Challenge. Winning teams receive funds to build an experiment and a spot on a NASA-sponsored high-altitude balloon flight. Use [this link](#) for more information. Contact support@futureengineers.org with any questions.

NEW FROM ND PACT (Formerly AP-TIP): Remote Teacher Collaboratives (RTCs) on Tuesday, September 29

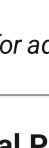
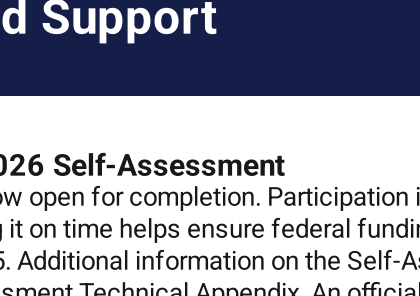
Remote Teacher Collaboratives are live, discussion-based professional workshops where participants delve into high-impact practices that facilitate the instruction of subject-specific content and empower all students. All AP and dual credit English, math, and science teachers are invited to attend the 2026-2027 RCT for their subject area. Registration for the session on Tuesday, September 29, is now open and free for all participants. Registered teachers can opt to earn professional growth plan (PGP) points for their participation. Learn more about RTCs, review the dates and topics by subject, and register online [here](#). Contact [Nikki Chase](#) with any questions.

NEW FROM KEEP INDIANA LEARNING (A DEPARTMENT OF CIESC): Science of Reading and Tiered Systems of Support (TSS)

Align your literacy intervention frameworks with evidence-based practices. Keep Indiana Learning will host Science of Reading & TSS on Thursday, October 22, from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. ET at CIESC in Indianapolis. This hands-on workshop equips K-12 administrators, literacy coaches, interventionists, and coordinators with a roadmap for strengthening literacy outcomes across tiers one, two, and three. Participants will learn to evaluate student screening data intentionally, structure efficient staffing patterns, and execute responsive reading interventions. Click [here](#) to learn more and register today as seats are limited. Contact [Keep Indiana Learning](#) with any questions.

NEW FROM INDIANA YOUTH INSTITUTE: Local College and Career Connects

Indiana Youth Institute (YI), in partnership with regional partners, will host a series of no-cost Local College and Career Connects events this fall. These events are designed to strengthen local college and career readiness efforts, and will bring together youth-serving professionals, educators, school counselors, higher education representatives, workforce development leaders, employers, and community partners to explore local priorities, share resources and promising practices, strengthen partnerships, and identify actionable next steps for supporting young people. All youth serving professionals are welcome to attend. Each event will run from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. local time and lunch will be provided for all registered participants. Click [here](#) to find dates and locations to register. Contact [Nathan Foor](#) with any questions.



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