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Dr. Jenner's Weekly Update

Weekly Newsletter from the Indiana Department of Education

January 9, 2026

A Message from Dr. Katie Jenner

Happy New Year, and welcome back! I hope your winter break was filled with memorable moments and plenty of rest.

At the start of each new year, I like to reflect on the bright spots of the previous year (specifically what I'm grateful for), as well as set goals for continued improvement in the year ahead. This past year gave us so much to celebrate, and those successes are a direct result of your local leadership and relentless focus on student outcomes. Let's take a look back, together, at just a few of the highlights of 2025!

Improving Academic Outcomes

- Indiana saw an **unprecedented nearly five percentage point increase** in third grade literacy, the largest single-year increase since the launch of IREAD in 2013.
 - For the first time ever, literacy rates **increased for every student population!**
 - Literacy rates for Black students, students in special education, and students receiving free/reduced price meals have increased for **four consecutive years**.
 - Over 450 schools** reached our state's 95% reading goal, an increase of nearly **180 elementary schools** in just one year.
 - Schools that participated in the Literacy Cadre had a **seven percentage point increase** in students passing IREAD, *nearly double* the growth of non-Cadre schools.
 - Another first:** All second grade students participated in IREAD.
 - 68% either Passed or are On-Track** to pass by the end of third grade.
 - With the help of this early indicator, over 65% of second graders who were At-Risk in 2024 **passed in 2025**.
 - Indiana rose to **sixth in the nation** in fourth-grade reading on NAEP...**the highest ranking in state history**.
- Intentional investments in summer reading and math support continued to show **return on investment for students**.
 - After just five weeks, students attending the **Summer Learning Labs** achieved *double-digit proficiency gains in both reading and math*. More than **12,000 students** participated.
- Chronik absenteeism improved** statewide for the third consecutive year, with improvements across all grade levels and student populations.
- Indiana once again partnered with the Indiana Chamber of Commerce Foundation to host the **Indiana Civics Bee**, where Barrett Hodorek, a student from Warsaw Community Schools went on to place second at the National Civics Bee hosted in Washington D.C.!

Maximizing the Four Years of High School

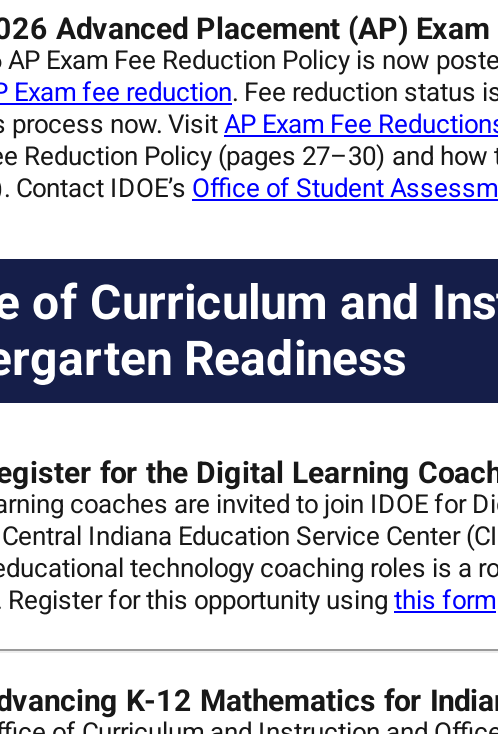
- New innovative partnerships** with higher education, business and industry, and the Indiana National Guard created **valuable guarantees for students** earning Indiana's new honors plus readiness seals.
 - All seven of our state's public colleges and universities and an increasing number of private institutions now **guarantee automatic acceptance** for any student who earns the enrollment honors plus seal.
 - Students earning the employment honors or honors plus seal are eligible for **direct entry** into the Central Midwest Carpenters Union apprenticeship, with similar benefits being developed with Operating Engineers Local 150.
- The **Indiana Career Apprenticeship Pathway (INCAP)** was launched, providing paid, on-the-job training that allows students to apply what they have learned in the classroom through meaningful, real-world experiences.
- The class of 2025 marked the **third consecutive year of improved graduation rates, setting a new state record with nearly 92% of Indiana seniors graduating**.

Celebrating Indiana Educators & Schools

- 11 schools earned the first-ever **Indiana Blue Ribbon Schools designation**. Indiana will continue to annually name a new cohort of designees, carrying on the recognition which was previously awarded by the U.S. Department of Education.
- At the **fourth annual Indiana Education Excellence Awards Gala**, many awards were provided to schools and educators in celebration of their work to support student learning, as well as being awarded nearly \$270,000 to continue this good work.
- Megan Johnson**, a teacher at Central Elementary School in Plainfield, was named our **2026 Indiana Teacher of the Year**.
- Kayleigh Fosnow**, a principal at New Palestine Elementary School, was surprised with the prestigious **Milken Educator Award** – a national award from the Milken Family Foundation – for creating a strong culture of learning and achievement.

Awards, Recognition, and Investment

- Indiana received the **2025 Frank Newman Award for State Innovation**, a national honor recognizing Indiana's *historic investments and advancements* in literacy, as well as the launch of the Indiana Graduates Prepared to Succeed (GPS) dashboard.
- A combined **\$75 million investment** from Lilly Endowment Inc. and state funding will accelerate literacy, expand high-quality summer learning, strengthen STEM pathways, modernize and expand career advising, and sustain critical learning tools for Hoosier students.



This is really incredible when you see it all on paper...and this list only *scratches the surface* of all the hard work that happened in 2025.

Thank you to all of our educators, families, higher education partners, business leaders, and community members for the difference you make every day. Together, let's continue to build on this momentum in 2026 and help more Hoosier students reach their potential!

And for those tuning into the Peach Bowl tonight...Hoo Hoo Hoo Hoosiers! Here's a picture from the Rose Bowl last week, where I ran into several fellow Indiana educators, including Greg Gastineau, a teacher and coach at Hamilton Southeastern High School. Regardless of who you cheer for (I support the Hoosiers, the Boilermakers, and all the Indiana teams—I just like to see our state win in ALL things!), I hope you enjoy the game tonight. Let's go INDIANA!

Office of Accountability

REMINDER: 2025-2026 Petition to Seek Performance-Based State Accreditation Submission Window Opening Soon

The submission window for non-public schools to submit a [petition for performance-based state accreditation](#) is now open through 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](#).

REMINDER: 2025 Federal Accountability Now Available to Schools

2025 federal accountability was released in an embargoed form to all public schools via the [accountability portal](#) on December 19, which will start the review period. Any issues that are identified through this review should be submitted through a data audit. Information regarding submitting a federal accountability audit can be found on Moodle in the School Accountability & Accreditation Community in the Federal Accountability System/Audit Information folder. The deadline to submit a federal accountability audit is January 23, 2026. Contact IDOE's [Office of Accountability](#) with any questions.

Office of Assessment

NEW: 2026 Advanced Placement (AP) Exam Fee Reduction Policy

The 2026 AP Exam Fee Reduction Policy is now posted on [AP Central](#). Review the policy and identify students who are eligible for the [AP Exam fee reduction](#). Fee reduction status is indicated only once per student, not for each exam. It is recommended to begin this process now. Visit [AP Exam Fee Reductions](#) or refer to the [2025-26 AP Coordinator's Manual, Part 1](#) for details about the AP Fee Reduction Policy (pages 27–30) and how to indicate student fee reduction status in AP Registration and Ordering (page 96). Contact IDOE's [Office of Student Assessment](#) with any questions.

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

NEW: Register for the Digital Learning Coach Camp on Tuesday, March 10

Digital learning coaches are invited to join IDOE for Digital Learning Coach Camp on Tuesday, March 10, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. ET at the Central Indiana Education Service Center (CIESC). This free professional collaboration and learning opportunity for those in educational technology coaching roles is a round-table style, one-day event that brings together coaches from across the state. Register for this opportunity using [this form](#) and contact IDOE's [Digital Learning Team](#) with any questions.

NEW: Advancing K-12 Mathematics for Indiana Students Overview

IDOE's Office of Curriculum and Instruction and Office of Student Assessment continue to collaborate with educators, administrators, higher education partners, and other stakeholders to advance evidence-based mathematics instruction and improve student learning at all grade levels. To keep schools and corporations informed, this [two-page overview](#) highlights current and upcoming mathematics initiatives, legislative updates, and available supports designed to ensure every student develops strong mathematical proficiency and achieves success. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

NEW: PRIME Math Course Informational Webinar for Educators

Educators interested in or planning to teach the Postsecondary Ready Investigative Mathematics Experience (PRIME) Math course for seniors are invited to join IDOE and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) for a live webinar on Thursday, January 22, from 3 to 3:30 p.m. ET. This is the second of two webinars in our informational series. Register [here](#) through the Indiana Learning Lab. The first webinar recording, geared towards administrators and counselors, can be found [here](#). Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

NEW: Middle School Advanced Mathematics Course Auto-Enrollment Office Hours

IDOE will host office hours for counselors and administrators serving students in grades six through eight. Registration information for the session scheduled for Thursday, January 29, at 12 pm ET will be available in next week's newsletter. The session will include a brief overview of the latest guidance, followed by open Q&A, with an opportunity to submit questions in advance. A recording will also be available. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

NEW: Participants Needed for Indiana's K-12 Social Studies Standards Revision Committees

IDOE's Office of Curriculum and Instruction is recruiting educators and other stakeholders for review committees that will review the Indiana Academic Standards for K-12 Social Studies. Interested individuals should complete and submit [this form](#) by 11:45 p.m. ET on Friday, January 23, to be considered for this collaborative opportunity. IDOE will review all submissions and select participants based on several criteria (e.g., teaching experience, current role, student populations served) to help maximize the representativeness of each committee. Contact IDOE's [Office of Curriculum and Instruction](#) with any questions.

Office of Educator Talent and the Literacy Center

NEW: Literacy Leadership Series Workshop

Join IDOE for the next Literacy Leadership Series workshop, "Same Science, Different Application: The Science of Reading for Grades 4-12," from 2 to 3 p.m. ET on Tuesday, January 13, with Kari Kurto from The Reading League. Starting in January and 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 and guidance, as well as 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.

REMINDER: Keys to Literacy No Cost Professional Development for Early Literacy Endorsement

IDOE's Early Literacy Endorsement Professional Development is available to current eligible Indiana educators who hold a valid professional educator license and teach in a content area that involves literacy instruction for PK-5 students. Eligible licensed Indiana educators may participate, at no cost, in Keys to Literacy. Registration is available [here](#) for those who are eligible, but space is limited. Contact the [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Early Literacy Professional Development Approval and Praxis Voucher Request

Educators needing to submit a request to verify completion of 80 hours of professional development can continue to follow the process outlined [here](#). Educators requesting a one-time Praxis voucher will use the same form, based on availability. Educators must schedule their exam within six months of receiving their voucher. Once the professional development has been approved, IDOE will issue a confirmation letter that will be used by the educator to complete the early literacy endorsement application in LVIS. An FAQ with additional information regarding the early literacy endorsement can be found [here](#), and we will continue to include additional questions and answers as they arise. Contact the [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Monthly Data Interpretation Office Hours Acadience Preferred Universal Screener

Acadience Learning, Inc. will host monthly office hours this school year to support school leaders and educators as they interpret the data from the state's preferred screener. Office hours will begin in the new year at 10:30 a.m. ET on Wednesday, January 14. Click [here](#) to join. Learn more information by visiting the Indiana Acadience webpage [here](#). Contact the [Literacy Center](#) with any questions.

Office of School Finance

NEW: Form 9 Data Due Saturday, January 31

Form 9 financial data for the period of July to December 2025 can now be submitted. The deadline for Form 9 submissions is Friday, January 31. The Form 9 application can be accessed via the [LINK Portal](#). Once in the portal, the financial administrator will navigate to the "Form 9" tile. Financial transparency information can also be submitted through the portal. Please contact [form9@doe.in.gov](#) with any questions.

NEW: Office of School Finance

IDOE's [Office of School Finance](#) will hold a [Form 9](#) Office Hours to discuss any questions you have about the July to December 2025 [Form 9](#) financial data submissions due by Saturday, January 31. Please mark your calendars for 10 a.m. ET on Tuesday, January 13, and use this link to access the Teams meeting.

NEW: January Tuition Support Payment

Review [this memo](#) regarding the January Tuition Support payment. Additional information regarding the Academic Performance Grant can be found here. Contact IDOE's [Office of School Finance](#) with any questions.

NEW: 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 and will be subject to the median rate. Please see [this memo](#) for more information. Questions can be sent to [icr9@doe.in.gov](#).

Office of School Support & Transformation

REMINDER: Annual 1003 Flexibility Waivers

IDOE's Office of School Support and Transformation is now [accepting applications](#) for 1003 Flexibility Waivers. Flexibility through waivers is offered to help support schools in their design efforts to improve student performance and outcomes, improve the efficiency of school operations, and promote innovative educational approaches to student learning. Read more about this opportunity in this [memo](#) and [Flexibility Guide for Indiana's K-12 Schools](#). Applications are now open and will be accepted on a rolling basis through April 24, 2026. Submitted applications will be reviewed by the State Board of Education during the following months: March, May, and July 2026. Contact [Georgia Watson](#) with any questions.

Office of Special Education, English Learning, and Migrant Education

NEW: Educational Benefit Review Pilot Grant Opportunity

IDOE's Office of Special Education is inviting 15 local educational agencies (LEAs) and charter schools to participate in [piloting an Educational Benefit Review \(EBR\) process](#) through a grant opportunity. Total grant awards will range from \$5,000 to \$25,000. An EBR is a structured process for evaluating whether an IEP is reasonably calculated to provide educational benefits to a student with a disability. This involves examining past and present IEPs (usually three years) to determine if the student is making appropriate progress and if the IEP is being adjusted correctly to meet changing needs. This grant provides funding for substitute teachers, travel, and associated costs that enable training of the LEA's EBR team. Grant kickoff informational meetings will be held on Wednesday, January 14, and Friday, January 16. Meeting times and links can be found below. Apply for the Educational Benefit Review Pilot Grant here. Please contact [EBRPilotGrant@doe.in.gov](#) with questions.

- Wednesday, January 14, at 9 a.m. ET via [Teams](#)
- Wednesday, January 14, at 12 p.m. ET via [Teams](#)
- Friday, January 16, at 9 a.m. ET via [Teams](#)
- Friday, January 16, at 2 p.m. ET via [Teams](#)

NEW: Proportionate Share/CEIS/CCEIS Monitoring Reports

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B FY24-FY25 proportionate share/CEIS/CCEIS semi-annual monitoring reports for the period July 1 through December 31, 2025, are due on Friday, January 30. The monitoring reports can be found in the [Office of Special Education Community Moodle](#). Submit the completed workbook and signed PDF via email to IDOE's [Office of Special Education Part B grants team](#), and contact your fiscal specialist with additional questions.

NEW: Updated Spread the Word - Part C to Part B Transition

The Spread the Word - Part C to Part B Transition has been updated to add clarity regarding Indiana's no opt-out policy, overriding dates in the statewide IEP system, and acceptable reasons for delay. There are no new policies or changes to state guidance. The changes reflect clarification from questions that IDOE's Office of Special Education has received over the past year. You can find the updated document here or on IDOE's [Special Education webpage](#) under "Early Childhood" and "Spread the Word." Email any questions you may have about the updates to [special.education@doe.in.gov](#).

NEW: WIDA-facilitated Workshop - Bringing Language into Focus: Expectations, Functions, and Features
IDOE's English Learning team is hosting a virtual two-part workshop, facilitated by WIDA, titled Bringing Language into Focus: Expectations, Functions, and Features. These sessions are designed to give K-12 educators an opportunity to take a closer look at the Key Language Uses (genre families) by engaging in a deeper exploration of Language Expectations, Language Functions, and Language Features. Participants will learn the importance and purpose of mentor texts to make language visible to students. Part one will take place on Thursday, February 26, and part two will take place on Thursday, March 5. Both sessions will occur from 3:30 to 5 p.m. ET. Registration is required via [this JoTform](#) by Friday, January 30, and space is limited. Please contact [englishlearners@doe.in.gov](#) with questions.

NEW: IDOE Special Programs for Multilingual Learners Office Hours

IDOE's Office of English Learning and Migrant Education is hosting a virtual office hours session on Thursday, January 29, at 3 p.m. ET to provide support for IDOE Special Programs, the statewide platform to house Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) and additional documentation for multilingual learners. In this session, updates to EL-related features of the system will be reviewed, along with time for questions from the field. Visit the [Indiana EL Professional Development Opportunities Calendar](#) for the meeting link. Contact IDOE's [Office of English Learning and Migrant Education](#) with any questions.

REMINDER: Early Childhood Community of Practice

The next quarterly Early Childhood Community of Practice will be held on Tuesday, January 13, from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. ET. The topic of this Community and Placement is Preschool. To prepare for this event, please gather your local policies related to the Least Restrictive Environment and Placement of preschool-aged students, and a count of how many children you have placed in various placement codes. Join the Community of Practice [here](#) and email [special.education@doe.in.gov](#) with any questions you may have.

Office of Title Grants and Support

NEW: January Coffee Chat

Join the Title Grants and Support team for monthly Coffee Chats! Coffee Chats are on the last Thursday of the month at 10 a.m. ET. January's topic will cover equitable services. Please join via Microsoft Teams [here](#) on Thursday, January 29, and share this link with any necessary stakeholders within your district. Please contact [Title@doe.in.gov](#) with any questions.

Indiana Commission for Higher Education

REMINDER: FAFSA Completion Dashboard for the 2026-2027 Cycle is Live

The Indiana Commission for Higher Education's [FAFSA Completion Dashboard](#) for the 2026-2027 cycle is now live. This tool provides real-time, transparent insights into FAFSA filing trends across Indiana, broken down by school, region, and county. You can now download FAFSA completion data on [ScholarTrack](#). If you are unable to pull FAFSA reports, please contact your [Outreach Coordinator](#) to complete a Data Share Agreement. Last year, Indiana achieved its statewide goal of 60% FAFSA completion! To recognize this achievement, the Commission is once again awarding a celebratory digital badge to schools that reach the 60% completion mark for the 2026-2027 FAFSA.

REMINDER: 2026-2027 Career and Technical Education (CTE) Course Titles and Descriptions

The 2026-2027 Secondary CTE Course Titles and Descriptions are now available and can be found [here](#). The Course Companion Document maintained by IDOE and CHE staff will be published to IDOE's website in the coming weeks and will include details, such as course durations, available credits, prerequisites, dual credit designations, and which course(s) support a CTE/Advanced Pathways and the new Indiana diploma. Questions regarding CTE courses can be shared with [c1e@che.in.gov](#).

News From Our Partners

NEW FROM DATA SCIENCE 4 EVERYONE (DS4E): Data Science + Artificial Intelligence (AI) Professional Development (PD) Week
After partnering with IDOE to host Indiana's Data Science Summit in December 2025, DS4E is inviting Indiana educators to apply for Data Science + AI PD Week in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Hosted at the University of New Mexico from Monday, June 22, through Friday, June 26, educators will be matched with a curriculum provider and receive targeted training in data science and AI instruction. Financial support for educators to attend is available, and preference will be given to teacher groups from the same school. The application is linked [here](#) and is due Thursday, January 15. Contact [matangi@uchicago.edu](#) with any questions.

NEW FROM INDIANA SPORTS CORP: Participate in the Indiana K-12 March Madness Bracket Challenge
Calling all Indiana K-12 teachers! Indiana Sports Corp. in partnership with the NCAA® is launching a statewide [Indiana March Madness Bracket Challenge](#) just for K-12 classrooms ahead of the 2026 Men's Final Four® in Indianapolis. Celebrate Indiana's basketball spirit by bringing this fun, free activity into your classroom and competing against other schools. Teachers are encouraged to integrate the bracket into existing lessons or use it to enhance curriculum-based activities. Schools with the top brackets in each grade group will earn statewide recognition and bragging rights, highlighted through local news and social media. [Register](#) your classroom today! Contact the [Indiana Sports Corp](#) with any questions.

NEW FROM KEEP INDIANA LEARNING (a department of CIESC): Virtual Events with Liesl McConchie
What we know about how the brain learns has the power to completely transform how we teach and lead mathematics. In these virtual sessions with brain-based learning expert Liesl McConchie, educators and administrators will explore how aligning math instruction and school systems with how the brain actually learns can dramatically improve student understanding and outcomes. [Learn more and register](#). Please contact [Keep Indiana Learning](#) with questions.

UPDATE FROM THE DISTRESSED UNIT APPEAL BOARD (DUAB): Fiscal Indicators Dashboard Correction
DUAB has corrected calculation errors in its [School Corporation Fiscal Indicators Dashboard](#). The corrections affected both the Annual Deficit/Surplus and the Fund Balance as a % of Expenditures. Not every school corporation's data was impacted, so corporations are advised to verify that information submitted for Board of Finance review is consistent with the dashboard. Questions about the dashboard and the indicator data can be directed to Dan Schmidt, DUAB Executive Director, at [dschmidt@duab.in.gov](#).

REMINDER FROM THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF TEACHERS OF MATHEMATICS (NCTM): 2026 NCTM Spring Conference in Indianapolis
NCTM will host its 2026 Spring Conference in Indianapolis from Wednesday, February 11, through Friday, February 13. This event offers a valuable opportunity for educators to engage with thought leaders in mathematics education, explore innovative practices, and connect with peers from across the country. Attendees can look forward to a variety of sessions, keynote presentations, and an exhibit hall showcasing the latest tools and resources. Visit [nctm.org/indy2026](#) to register.

REMINDER FROM KEEP INDIANA LEARNING (a department of CIESC): ILEARN Checkpoint 3 Workshops
Did you miss the statewide workshops with IDOE in the fall? CIESC will host two options in January - one for ELA and one for math. These workshops will help guide your content, instruction, and interventions. [Learn more and register today](#). Contact [Keep Indiana Learning](#) with questions.