



# Indiana Department of Education

SUPPORTING STUDENT SUCCESS

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Adam Horst, State Budget Director  
Office of Management and Budget

**FROM:** Dr. Tony Bennett, State Superintendent of Public Instruction  
Indiana Department of Education

**DATE:** September 10, 2010

**SUBJECT:** Agency Overview – Budget Transmittal Letter

### Introduction

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) serves a critical role in supporting and growing Indiana's economy by ensuring all Hoosier students receive the education they need to enter college or the workforce positioned to compete with their peers across the nation and around the world.

Specifically, the department has identified three primary goals to create a culture of academic excellence: At least 90 percent of students will pass both English and Math portions of the ISTEP+; 25 percent of high school graduates will achieve high scores on at least one Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate exam—or earn college credit in high school; and 90 percent of students will graduate from high school with a diploma.

To achieve these goals, IDOE is raising expectations, eliminating unnecessary regulations, improving instructional quality and school leadership, opening multiple pathways for success, and increasing accountability for all students and educators. Every reform initiative and function is performed to make students the focus in Indiana's system of schools.

### Structure and Organization

Indiana's Superintendent of Public Instruction leads the Indiana Department of Education. IDOE is now divided into four equally-important administrative and operational categories, each of which is overseen by an Assistant Superintendent who reports directly to the Chief of Staff and Superintendent.

The Assistant Superintendent of Operations oversees the Information Technology, Finance, Educator Licensing and Assessment divisions. This operational category is responsible for

maintaining and improving all IDOE's internal and public web and technology-based functions and reforms, such as the department website and the Learning Connection. Additionally, this category is responsible for reporting and distributing all state and federal funding as well as communicating funding-related news, requirements and changes to Indiana schools. IDOE's Operations staff also ensures Indiana educators are properly licensed and coordinates all state assessment functions—including ISTEP+, end-of-course assessments, and Indiana's Growth Model.

The Assistant Superintendent for Student Learning leads the Curriculum/Instruction, Special Education, Title I, and English Language Learners/Response to Intervention/ Integrated Services divisions. This is the administrative category primarily responsible for overseeing and improving instructional quality in Indiana schools. The divisions in this category work to make sure all students receive the targeted instruction they need to succeed and all schools have the support and training they need to reach every student.

The department's Assistant Superintendent for Support Services heads the Accreditation, Student Services, Nutrition and Transportation divisions. Divisions within this administrative category are responsible for evaluating schools' compliance with Indiana's accreditation requirements as well as for overseeing school safety, busing, and student health and nutrition programs.

The Assistant Superintendent for Policy, Legal and Communications leads IDOE's Communications, Policy, Legal, Turnaround, and Results/Reform divisions. This administrative category works directly with all divisions within the department to build, promote and advance IDOE goals for academic excellence for all students while complying with existing state and federal education law.

### **Indiana Department of Education's Priority Focus**

This administration entered office with a plan to raise the academic expectations and benchmarks for all Indiana students.

1. To meet the 90-25-90 goals, IDOE is focusing efforts on supporting classroom instruction across the curriculum—but particularly in Mathematics and Language Arts—and the department is creating greater and more relevant college and career pathways to help all students realize success.
2. The department will free Indiana schools from unnecessary regulations and eliminate barriers to developing new, innovative learning initiatives. This includes providing families an array of educational opportunities from which to choose.
3. IDOE will improve instructional quality and enhance school governance and leadership. In particular, the department will focus on creating consistent, transparent and rigorous evaluations for teachers and school leaders that make growth in student achievement a primary consideration. This effective evaluation tool, once developed, will assist school administrators in reforming the way staff decisions are made - including promotions, placements and reductions in force.

4. Emphasis will be on developing support systems that facilitate academic achievement and career preparation, including innovative technologies, effective school guidance and student transportation systems.
5. IDOE will establish high and clear standards for success, keep score and ensure school accountability is transparent to the public.
6. Finally, the department will provide exceptional customer service while operating with optimal efficiency and aligning all available resources to support student learning.

### **Priority Focus Accomplishments**

In less than two years, the IDOE has successfully implemented a number of important reforms that already are leading to increased student achievement and general public interest in improving Indiana's schools.

Indiana students have made real gains toward reaching the 90-25-90 goals.

- Across the board, students achieved one of the largest-ever increases in ISTEP+ scores. 81 percent of schools increased the percentage of students passing both Math and English/Language Arts sections of the exam—with increases of three to four percent in schools statewide.
- The number of students graduating from high school in four years increased by 3.7 percent—reaching 81.5 percent.
- Indiana has led the nation in increased access to Advanced Placement exams, with the number of students achieving scores of 3, 4 or 5 increasing by 20.8 percent for African American students and 42.8 percent for Hispanic students.

IDOE has eliminated burdensome regulations and barriers to innovative school programs and models.

- The department successfully implemented the Rules for Educator Preparation and Accountability (REPA), which removed costly college-coursework requirements for teachers who were renewing their licenses. REPA also improved the beginning teacher residency requirements and made it easier for knowledgeable adults from other fields to enter the teaching profession.
- IDOE worked with the Indiana General Assembly to ensure there are no limits or caps on the number of charter schools operating statewide.

IDOE has taken innovative steps to improve teacher and school-leader quality.

- The REPA licensing rules require all new teachers to be content-experts in the subjects they teach. Moreover, the revised rules make professional development more focused on meeting the unique needs of students in each school building and community.
- IDOE has partnered with Marian University to establish a Turnaround Leadership Academy to identify, recruit, train and develop transformational leaders focused on turning around Indiana's chronically low achieving schools.

- IDOE has worked with an array of educational and community stakeholders, including state-level union representatives, to develop working examples of fair, consistent teacher and administrator evaluation tools that consider growth in student achievement as a fundamental cornerstone in school governance.
- The Indiana Growth Model is helping IDOE and members of the general public identify schools, educators and leaders that show the greatest gains in student learning.
- IDOE worked with the General Assembly to close loopholes that allowed teachers to remain in the classroom even after being charged with potential dangerous crimes. This legislation included increased reporting requirements and criminal background checks.

The department actively supports creative innovation in schools.

- Indiana is now the national leader in New Tech schools, making us a model for technology innovation in the classroom.
- IDOE implemented the Classroom Innovation in Mathematics program, which allows districts to pilot digital media curricula and technology-based instruction during the 2010-2011 school year.
- IDOE expanded its virtual charter school pilot program to adjust to and meet the challenges and needs of a 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom.

IDOE is increasing accountability and transparency.

- Eleven years after becoming law, IDOE is implementing the accountability portion of P.L. 221 to help turnaround Indiana's lowest-achieving schools.
- The Indiana State Board of Education voted to change the P.L. 221 labels to an A-F letter grade standard, thereby simplifying and clarifying the state's school evaluation component.
- The Growth Model allows parents and communities to see clearly and fairly how well schools are educating children.

The department has increased customer service and aligned its resources to support student learning.

- IDOE has streamlined internal organization and functions to be more user-friendly and efficient.
- For the first time ever, IDOE is communicating directly with Indiana teachers to share important department changes, initiatives, news, services and opportunities.
- IDOE realized more than \$4 million dollars in internal savings.
- The department created the Graduation Incentive Program to recognize schools that achieve the largest gains in students graduating from high school in four years.
- In collaboration with the State Board of Education, IDOE provided schools the Citizens Checklist to help school find ways to cut their budgets without reducing instructional staff.
- The department created the Operations Support Team (OST) to consult and assist local schools in addressing the fiscal and operational challenges of school administration.

IDOE is increasing and improving the avenues and career pathways for a stronger workforce.

- IDOE revamped Indiana’s Career and Technical Education system to better reflect the needs and opportunities provided in our modern workforce.

IDOE is providing instructional support and tools to improve classroom instruction and student academic growth.

- With bipartisan support from the Indiana General Assembly, the state has taken a stance against the practice of socially promoting students who don’t have the basic reading skills they need to be successful. No longer will third graders be passed on to fourth grade if they cannot read proficiently at grade level.
- Along with this new legislation, IDOE developed a statewide reading framework that is currently debuting at Opportunity Schools across the state.
- The department has developed curriculum and scope and sequence maps aligned to the newly adopted Common Core State Standards to help educators transition to these new standards and plan their instruction more effectively.

### **Upcoming Challenges**

The Indiana Department of Education, while endeavoring to create equal and excellent educational opportunities for all students, faces many obstacles to reform. Primarily, these challenges exist because our current system of schools is antiquated, inefficient, and too often puts the needs of adults before children. In our effort to put the full focus of Indiana’s schools back on Hoosier students, the department has faced—and likely will continue to face—opposition from those who benefit most from our current educational system.

Moreover, our state’s current economic uncertainty is forcing schools to do more with less money. This volatile economic climate has forced school leaders to rethink the budget process to consider how they can get the most education with the resources they already have.

IDOE has a long way to go toward realizing and achieving our 90-25-90 goals for Indiana students. To meet our goals, the state must maintain the current momentum for education reform and public interest and engagement in improving our schools.

### **How We Will Meet These Challenges**

To meet and overcome these impediments to success, IDOE will continue to do what it has done for the past 20 months—set high expectations, promote innovation, increase accountability and transparency, and provide the support educators need to help students succeed.

Communication and collaboration will continue to be critical to implementing our short- and long-term priorities. Ongoing work with and feedback from educators, union representatives, community, legislative and business leaders as well as parents and families will help us tailor the best solutions to problems in Indiana schools.

Fiscally, we must lead by example. We are committed to streamlining our services to ensure every dollar spent within IDOE is spent to support student learning and improve Indiana schools statewide.

### **Priority Requests**

1. **State Tuition Support:** A school funding formula must be developed that has two basic tenets: a fair and equitable funding amount for all students and money that follows the student to the school he or she attends. In the new school environment in which schools can enroll students from outside their school boundaries and the entire General Fund is paid for by the State, we should no longer distribute dollars to schools for students they are no longer educating.
2. **Categorical Funding:** Categorical funding should be consolidated into a single line item so local schools have the flexibility to invest the funding in the areas that meet the needs of their students.
3. **Drivers' Education and Motorcycle safety:** While the need for high-quality drivers' education and motorcycle safety programs is high, the IDOE is not the proper administrator of these programs. Neither of these programs relates to IDOE's goals, and both could be properly administered by agencies with goals more aligned with transportation and public safety.
4. **Innovation Fund:** In the 2009 budget, the General Assembly invested \$5M in two innovative educational programs, New Tech and the Woodrow Wilson Fellows. This program was formally named School Improvement Programs. This significant policy breakthrough showed Indiana's commitment to invest in new education models and has proven invaluable for thousands of Hoosier students. The IDOE suggests continuing this investment but recommends modeling it after the federal i3 program, creating a competitive grant process to ensure that investments are made in the highest quality programs with the greatest return on investment.
5. **Testing:** Adding the appropriation for PSAT funding and AP Exams to the line item for Testing and Remediation would allow the state to create a comprehensive accountability system without prescribing the assessment. An additional \$600k investment in this line item would be used to cover the increased expenses of more students taking PSAT and AP Exams as these two line items have not covered the costs of the assessment in each of the last two years.