



INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

To: Indiana State Board of Education
From: Chad E. Ranney, General Counsel – Indiana State Board of Education
Date: June 3, 2020
RE: **Recommended Decision – Excel Center-Kokomo 18/19 A-F Appeal**

Recommendation: Approve the attached Recommended Decision and the corresponding 2018-2019 accountability category placement.

511 IAC 6.2-10-11 explains:

Sec. 11. A school or school corporation may petition for review of its accountability category placement based on objective factors the school or school corporation considers relevant because the annual assessment data do not accurately reflect school performance, growth, or multiple measures, as applicable. Objective factors include significant demographic changes in the student population, errors in data, or other significant issues including, but not limited to, errors in the application of this rule to determine an accountability category.

The attached Recommended Decision provided to the Indiana State Board of Education (“Board”) for consideration has been drafted and issued by a hearing officer pursuant to 511 IAC 6.2-10-11. Board staff recommends the Board approve the attached Recommended Decision and the corresponding 2018-2019 accountability category placement.¹

1. Excel Center-Kokomo - A

¹ The final categories or designations of school performance listed in this memo reflect the calculations and method for placing schools outlined in P.L.2-2020.

**BEFORE THE INDIANA
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

IN THE MATTER OF:

EXCEL CENTER – KOKOMO
(SCHOOL #2976),

PETITIONER

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APPEAL PURSUANT TO
511 IAC 6.2-10-11

**COMBINED FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW, AND
RECOMMENDED DECISION**

I. Reason for Appeal

Excel Center – Kokomo appeals its 2018-2019 category placement of a “B” grade (89.9 points) asserting that the Indiana Department of Education (“Department”) incorrectly applied the adult high school accountability model when calculating the school’s graduation rate.

II. Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law

1. Excel Center – Kokomo is an adult high school located in Kokomo, Indiana that is authorized by the Indiana Charter School Board.

2. Pursuant to Ind. Code § 20-31-8-5, the Indiana State Board of Education (“Board”) shall annually assess the performance of adult high schools based on the metrics outlined in 511 IAC 6.3.

3. Pursuant to 511 IAC 6.3-1-2, the accountability category of Excel Center – Kokomo shall be based on the sum of its weighted graduation calculation score and its weighted college and career readiness score. The Graduation calculation score shall be forty percent (40%) of the overall score, and the college and career readiness score shall be sixty percent (60%) of the overall score.

4. On August 26, 2019, Excel Center – Kokomo received an accountability category placement of a “B” (89.9 points) for the 2018-2019 school year.

5. On September 11, 2019, Excel Center – Kokomo timely appealed the Board’s 2018-2019 Accountability Calculation stating:

It is our belief that IDOE incorrectly applied the AHS accountability model when calculating the “Graduation Rate”. . . . Since the A-F grade being assessed is for the 2018-19 school year, the “prior year cohort” should be the 2017-18 4-year graduation cohort and the 2016-17 4-year/5-year graduation cohort (for the purpose of 5 year improvement). Instead IDOE used the same year cohort, the 2018-19 4-year graduation cohort and the 2017-18 4-year/5-year graduation cohort in their calculations – which we feel is an incorrect translation of the code.

6. Excel Center – Kokomo provided a copy of its grade calculations as applied by IDOE, a copy of its grade calculations using what the school believes are the proper cohorts, a copy of the adult high school accountability logic with areas of concern highlighted, and a summary of how it believes the Department misinterpreted that logic.

7. 511 IAC 6.3-1-3(d) provides:

The graduation rate shall be determined as follows:

STEP ONE: Calculate the five (5) year graduation rate for the cohort immediately preceding the prior year cohort.

STEP TWO: Subtract the four (4) year graduation rate for the cohort immediately preceding the prior year cohort from the number determined under STEP ONE.

STEP THREE: Add the number determined under STEP TWO to the four (4) year graduation rate from the prior year cohort.

8. 511 IAC 6.3-1-3, Graduation Calculation, subsections (a) through (c) provides:

(a) The graduation calculation shall be comprised of:

- (1) the graduation to enrollment percentage of *the school year being assessed*;
- (2) the graduation rate; and
- (3) the graduation qualifying exam passing rate.

(b) To obtain a graduation calculation, a school must have at least ten (10) students graduate *in the school year being assessed*. If a school has fewer than ten (10) graduates in the school year being assessed, then the school’s grade shall be based

on the current graduates aggregated with each immediately preceding year's graduates until a cohort of at least ten (10) graduates is reached.

(c) The graduation to enrollment percentage is a fraction expressed as a percentage, the denominator of which is the school's within-year-average number of students reported for purposes of IC 20-24-7-13.5(b)(1), *the numerator of which is the number of students who graduated during the school year and reported by August 1st* to the department of education, the quotient of which shall be multiplied by four (4) and as follows:

- (1) The graduation to enrollment percentage shall be weighted as ninety percent (90%) of the overall graduation calculation.
- (2) The maximum graduation to enrollment percentage score is one hundred (100) points.
- (3) The graduation to enrollment percentage shall be published with the school graduation rate.

9. In order to determine the “prior year cohort”, the Department referred back to the language in 511 IAC 6.3-1-3(a) through -3(c), which read together indicates that the graduation calculation is to be based on the graduates in the school year being assessed. As such, for purposes of applying the Board’s rule, the Department has interpreted the “prior year cohort” to be the cohort for the school year being assessed, which also happens to be the school year prior to the school year in which the accountability calculation is conducted.

10. The Department’s interpretation is consistent with the language of 511 IAC 6.3-1-3 and has been applied consistently to all adult high schools in the state. For the 2018-2019 school year, Excel Center – Kokomo’s four-year graduation rate should be based on the 2019 cohort, and the school’s five year graduation rate should be based on the 2018 cohort.

III. Recommended Decision

The Board’s accountability category calculation for Excel Center – Kokomo was correct. For purposes of applying 511 IAC 6.3, “prior year cohort” refers to the cohort for the school year being assessed. For the 2018-2019 school year, Excel Center – Kokomo’s four-year graduation rate should be based on the 2019 cohort, and the school’s five year graduation rate should be

based on the 2018 cohort. The Board's calculation of a category placement of a "B" (89.9 points) was proper and should be sustained.

DATE: May 27, 2020

/s/ Chad E. Ranney, Hearing Officer

NOTICE OF APPEAL RIGHT

Petitioner may file objections to the Hearing Officer's Recommended Decision but must do so no later than ten (10) calendar days from the date the Petitioner receives the Recommended Decision. Any objections must be in writing and must state the legal basis for the objection. Written objections are to be submitted to the Indiana State Board of Education as follows:

ATTN: Chad Ranney General Counsel
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on May 27, 2020, I served the foregoing Recommended Decision on the following persons at the email addresses shown below:

Anne Davis
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Email: Anne.davis@goodwilleducation.org

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/s/ Chad E. Ranney, Hearing Officer