



INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TO: Mr. Kevin M. Trezak, Assistant Superintendent, River Forest School Corporation; Dr. Steven C. Disney Jr., Superintendent, River Forest School Corporation
FROM: Brian Murphy, Hearing Officer
RE: Meister, 2015–16 Letter Grade
DATE: February 28, 2017

Finding: John I Meister Elementary School's ("Meister") appeal of its "F" grade should be denied.

I. Facts

The River Forest School Corporation has been in transition in recent years. Meister went from a K-5 school with 239 students to a K-4 building with 253 students during the 2014-15 school year. The increase in students resulted from a school that closed within the corporation. During the 2015-16 school year, Meister underwent more significant changes. Namely, the school shifted back to serving grades K-5 and took on an additional 102 students. Many of these students had been in three elementary schools in three years.

In addition, during the 2015-16 school year, one of Meister's third grade teachers passed, which devastated the school.

II. Argument and Analysis

Meister argues that its grade would have been higher had it not been for the restructuring it went through in recent years causing significant changes in its student population, and the passing of one of its third grade teachers. Meister also points out the difficulties a smaller school faces when taking on a significant influx of students, including, for example, acclimation, and management of climate and culture.

For the sake of argument, assuming that an influx of students would be a basis for an appeal, Cynthia Roach, the SBOE's Senior Director of Accountability & Assessment, looked at the new students at issue in this case. Ms. Roach found that while the new students to Meister did perform lower than those currently attending, these same new students also grew at a greater rate, and would not have substantially affected Meister's grade. Therefore, an appeal cannot be granted on this basis.

Meister also argues that the death of one of its third grade teachers adversely affected its grade. After reviewing the data, it is impossible to ascertain what effect, if any, this had on Meister's overall grade.

III. Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, Meister's appeal should be denied.