



INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TO: MSD Southwest Allen County School Corporation
FROM: Timothy Schultz, Hearing Officer, Indiana State Board of Education
RE: Appeal by MSD Southwest Allen County School Corporation of its 2015-16
Corporate Letter Grade
DATE: March 8, 2017

Finding MSD Southwest Allen County School Corporation's appeal of its 2015-16 corporate category placement of a "B" grade should be denied.

I. Facts

MSD Southwest Allen County School Corporation ("Southwest") received a corporate letter grade of "B" for the 2015-16 school year. Southwest appealed the "B" grade due to concerns regarding the 2015-16 ISTEP assessment.

II. Argument and Analysis

Southwest contends that the 2015-16 ISTEP results of many for its students were invalid due to multiple technology issues the corporation experienced during the administration of the online assessment. Southwest asserts that "those disruptions removed any standardization of the testing environment."¹ In other words, Southwest is asserting that the technology issues experienced by its students were the direct cause of the corporation's lower ISTEP scores for the 2015-16 school year.

However, it is not possible to ascertain if the corporation's technology issues caused the lower ISTEP scores or if the lower scores were caused by other factors. For example, the corporation's argument does not account for the ISTEP's more rigorous standards incorporated during the last two years. The 2015-16 ISTEP test was the second year of a new state assessment for grades 3-8 based on Indiana's more rigorous college and career ready standards. As a result of the transition to new standards and assessment, a new baseline was established for ISTEP beginning in 2015.

In light of the more rigorous college and career ready standards recently incorporated into ISTEP, which coincided with the corporation's technology issues, it impossible to determine the cause of the corporation's lower scores.

For the foregoing reasons, I find that Southwest's appeal for the 2015-16 school year should be denied and its 2015-16 category placement of a "B" should not be replaced with a null grade.

¹ See A-F appeal, submitted by Southwest, on 1/13/17.