



INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

To: Indiana State Board of Education
From: Timothy Schultz, General Counsel
Date: June 1, 2016
RE: Approval to Create Expedited A-F Appeals Process for Feeder Schools

MEMORANDUM

Joint Staff Recommendation: Approve the creation of an expedited appeal process to address feeder school grade calculations for the 2015-2016 school year.

Issue

The purpose of this memorandum is to notify the State Board of Education (“Board”) of an issue regarding feeder schools that may arise when the 2015-2016 A-F grades are calculated by the Department of Education (“IDOE”).

Indiana Code 20-31-8-4 explains that the Board “shall place each school in a category or designation of school performance once annually based on the department’s findings from the assessment of performance and academic growth” factors set forth under Indiana law. However, not all schools receive “growth” points. Pursuant to 511 IAC 6.2-10-5, growth points are calculated and assigned starting in grade 4. Based on the manner in which growth points are awarded, feeder schools, which are defined as elementary schools having any combination of kindergarten, grade 1, or grade 2 only, are unable earn growth points. Furthermore, 511 IAC 6.2-10-7 explains that a “feeder school’s accountability category shall be based on the performance domain only” of the receiving school. This creates a situation in which the A-F grades are assigned to feeder schools that may not accurately reflect the schools’ progress.

Proposed Solution

Recently, staff from the IDOE and the Board discussed the issue and administrative rules outlined above, to consider possible options to remedy the situation. To ensure that the A-F grades applied to feeder schools accurately reflect the progress of these schools, staff recommend allowing IDOE to adjust feeder school grades, as further explained below, based on 511 IAC 6.2-6-12, which states:

The board shall develop criteria for a school or school corporation to appeal its category placement based on objective factors the school considers relevant because the annual assessment data does not provide an accurate picture of school improvement and performance, including significant demographic changes in the student population, errors in data, or other significant issues.

If this memorandum is approved by the Board, it will serve as the criteria for feeder schools to have the option of a grade calculation that includes growth. If feeder schools decide to appeal any other issue relating to the 2015-2016 A-F grades, schools must follow the normal appeal procedures.

The IDOE and Board staff recommend that feeder schools be promptly notified of this issue. This notification will explain that when 2015-2016 grades are initially issued to feeder schools for review, the schools will be provided two grade calculations. The first grade will be calculated pursuant to 511 IAC 6.2-10-7. The second grade will be calculated to include the feeder schools proportionate amount of overall performance and growth from the receiving school. The number of receiving schools shall be limited to 5. *See* 511 IAC 6.2-10-7(c). Feeder schools will then be afforded the option to receive a calculation that includes growth that will be calculated as outlined above.

Once the feeder schools receive this information, each school must immediately notify the Board whether the school wishes to opt-in as outlined above. The Board will then direct the IDOE to apply the growth calculation for any school that opts-in to the approach that allows for a growth calculation. If a school does not communicate its desire to opt-in to the approach that allows for a growth calculation, then the feeder school's accountability categorical designation will be calculated in the manner outlined in 511 IAC 6.2-10-7. Schools will be given instructions on how and to whom to notify of the decision to opt-in to the approach outlined above.