



Indiana State Board of Education
Request for Freeway School Accreditation
Board Date: April 4 2012

School: Independence Academy of Indiana

Education Director: Lisa Roesler

Address: 612 West 42nd Street
Indianapolis, IN, 46208

Grade Span: 5-12

Public/Private: Private

Enrollment: 26

Targeted Population: Students with high functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome.

The following executive summary has been compiled by the Office of School Accreditation for use by the Indiana State Board of Education. It includes information presented by the school during the accreditation process, potential legal standard issues, and any other information collected during the process that may impact accreditation.

Identity: The Independence Academy of Indiana (IA) is a private, non-denominational school, operated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity by The Independence Academy of Indiana, Inc. The school serves students with high functioning Autism and Asperger's Syndrome in grades 5 through 12. The mission of The Independence Academy of Indiana is to inspire and enable students to achieve their highest level of independence and academic success. This will be accomplished through small class sizes and a multi-sensory and individually paced approach. The environment fosters a unique sense of community and acceptance that affirms these unique students.

The student body comes from Indianapolis and surrounding counties and as far away as New Castle and Mishawaka. A family moved here from Illinois in order to enroll their child at IA because of the unique program, and the school continually receives inquiries and visits from out-of-state families. Students come from public and private elementary schools, as well as home schools. There is racial diversity in the student population.

Curriculum: Students are administered individualized testing at the beginning and end of each academic year. The primary testing instruments are Brigance Diagnostics and the Globe Fearon Secondary Reading Assessment Inventory. Analysis of test results determines individual student needs and academic goals. End of year testing measures student progress over the



course of the year. Test results are also used to measure the effectiveness of instructional methods and help identify what changes need to be made.

All the students at IA are on service plans. Therefore, after observations and consultations, every student has written behavior, social and academic goals developed by IA, the parents, and Indianapolis Public Schools (the district service provider). Autistic students need a great deal of social/behavioral instruction, as well as academic, so there are daily goals in those areas that are tracked daily and analyzed quarterly.

Testing History: Students are administered individualized testing at the beginning and end of each academic year. The primary testing instruments are Brigance Diagnostics and the Globe Fearon Secondary Reading Assessment Inventory. Analysis of test results determines individual student needs and academic goals. End of year testing measures student progress over the course of the year. Test results are also used to measure the effectiveness of instructional methods and help identify what changes need to be made.

Staffing: The staff has grown from three full-time teachers and one aid to four full-time teachers, a full-time aid, three part-time aids, a Director and volunteers. One teacher is licensed, one has an expired license and the Director has an administrator license. The teachers are thoroughly trained and educated in their subject areas. The aids have advanced degrees in psychology and education. The student-teacher ratio is 6:1 without factoring in aids.

Waiver Requests: The only suspended rule that is requested is to have teachers who are not highly qualified or appropriately licensed. The current unlicensed teachers are extremely knowledgeable in their subject area and have been teaching for a minimum of 3 years. Future hires will be required to have appropriate licensing.

Issues: Staffing

Recommendations: Full Five-Year Freeway Accreditation

Rationale: Existing staff is well qualified and there is a commitment to attempt to hire licensed teachers whenever future vacancies occur.