

Better Connecting Students to their Future

September 22, 2026

WHY DO WE NEED TO RETHINK HIGH SCHOOL?



Fewer Indiana students are **enrolling** in higher education, and even fewer are *graduating*.



Students are graduating without the skills needed to secure rewarding **career opportunities**.



Students who dream of **enlisting** are finding out they are disqualified when it's *too late*.



Student apathy is high, leading to high rates of **chronic absenteeism** in grades 9-12.

THE HIGH SCHOOL EXPERIENCE OF THE *FUTURE*

OUR SHARED GOAL: The high school experience prepares every student for success, helping them to maximize their educational attainment, regardless of their unique goals and aspirations for the future.



Enrollment



Employment



Enlistment & Service



OUR DESIGN PRIORITIES

Maximize *flexibility* for students to *personalize* their journey while maintaining rigor

Increase *simplicity* for students, parents, and schools

Increase access to work-based learning and credentials of value



FINAL DIPLOMA RULE

The final rule maintains:

- **One base diploma**
 - Minimum, flexible requirements for all students
- Opportunities for students to earn **readiness seals**
 - Aligned with their unique path



*Note: The federally-required **alternate diploma** for students in special education with a significant cognitive disability is still available.*



INDIANA
DEPARTMENT OF
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THE NEW INDIANA DIPLOMA: ELIGIBLE COURSES FOR SY 25-26

The new Indiana diploma, effective for all students beginning with the class of 2029, includes a base (minimum requirements) for every student, plus the opportunity to earn readiness seals aligned with their unique path. Students are encouraged to seize this flexibility by personalizing their high school experience. The new seals provide additional intentionality to maximize readiness and are designed to be permeable, allowing students to update their graduation plan and pivot, if their original interests and goals change. Students who do not earn a seal must still complete components 2 and 3 of Graduation Pathways.

REQUIRED CREDITS

FLEXIBLE CREDITS

ENGLISH	8 CREDITS	2 credits: English 9	1 credit: Communications-focused course - Ex. Speech, Journalism, Visual Communication, etc. 5 additional English credits - Ex: English 10-12, American Literature, World Literature, Expository Writing, etc.
MATH	7 CREDITS	2 credits: Algebra I 1 credit: Personal Finance	4 additional math credits - Ex. Geometry, Algebra II, Pre-Calculus, Probability and Statistics, Business Math, etc.
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ENGINEERING	7 CREDITS	2 credits: Biology I 1 credit: Computer Science	2 additional science credits - Ex. Biology II, Chemistry I, Physics I, etc. 2 STEM-focused credits - Ex. Plant and Soil Science, Principles of Engineering, Software Development, etc.
SOCIAL STUDIES	5 CREDITS	2 credits: U.S. History 1 credit: U.S. Government	2 credits: World Perspectives - Ex. Geography and History of the World, AP World History, French III, etc.
PE/HEALTH	2 CREDITS	1 credit: Physical Education 1 credit: Health & Wellness	
PERSONALIZED ELECTIVES	12 CREDITS	Students are encouraged to utilize the new readiness-seals to align these personalized electives with their unique goals. Personalized electives can include a variety of courses, such as Career and Technical Education (CTE), Performing or Fine Arts, and World Languages.	
COLLEGE & CAREERS	1 CREDIT	1 credit: Preparing for College & Careers	Preparing for College and Careers can be offered in middle school to provide additional flexibility in a student's high school schedule.

A complete list of eligible courses for the 25-26 school year is can be found [here](#).

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BLUEPRINT FOR SUCCESS: READINESS-SEALS

Readiness seals are designed to be permeable, allowing students to update their graduation plan and pivot, if their original interests and goals change. Although seals are optional, students are encouraged to utilize the blueprints below to focus their flexible credits into a connected pathway that aligns with their future goals. Students may earn one or multiple seals. Graduation Pathways requirements will be satisfied through completion of any seal.



ENROLLMENT



EMPLOYMENT



ENLISTMENT & SERVICE



- Complete at least 4 World Language and 6 Social Studies credits
- Complete at least 8 Math credits
 - Algebra I plus Geometry, Algebra II, and Pre-Calculus or any advanced math credits aligned to their course of study
- Complete at least 6 Science credits
 - Biology I plus Chemistry or Physics or any advanced lab science credits aligned to their course of study
- Earn a C or higher in all courses and earn a cumulative B average
- Complete one of the following:
 - Earn 4 credits in AP, IB, or Cambridge courses and take corresponding exams
 - Earn 6 college credits
 - Score a 1550 on the SAT or a 36 on the ACT
 - Earn two of the following:
 - At least 3 college credits
 - 2 credits in AP courses and take corresponding exams
 - 2 credits in IB courses and take corresponding exams
 - 2 credits in Cambridge courses and take corresponding exams

- Complete one of the following:
 - A market-driven credential of value aligned to a specific occupation
 - 3 courses in a Career and Technology Education (CTE) pathway
 - An approved career preparation experience aligned to Indiana's CSA program, or
 - An approved, locally-created pathway
- Complete 150 hours of work-based learning (may include multiple experiences that are paid, unpaid, on-site, or simulated)
- Demonstrate skill development in Communication, Collaboration, and Work Ethics
- Meet attendance goal:
 - At least 1 school year with no more than 3 days of unexcused absences

- Complete one of the following:
 - Introduction to Public Service course or approved locally-created equivalent
 - Enlistment or developing an awareness of the physical standards and character required for service
 - One year of ROTC or Civil Air Patrol in high school
- Achieve a score of 28 on the ASVAB and complete one of the following:
 - All three components of the Career Exploration Program
 - A career exploration tool approved by DOE
- Meet attendance goal:
 - At least 1 school year with no more than 3 days of unexcused absences
- Demonstrate skill development in Communication, Collaboration, and Work Ethics
 - Externally verified through a partnership experience with current military personnel, veterans, or other public safety professionals



Earn the Honors Enrollment Seal, plus:

- Earn a credential of value that may include, for example:
 - Associate degree
 - Technical Certificate
 - Indiana College Care
 - AP Scholar with Distinction
 - Cambridge AICE Diploma or
 - IB Diploma
- Complete at least 75 hours of work-based learning (may include multiple experiences that are paid, unpaid, on-site, or simulated)
- Demonstrate skill development in the following areas: Communication, Collaboration, and Work Ethics

Earn the Honors Employment Seal, plus:

- Earn a market-driven credential of value that may include, for example:
 - Associate degree
 - Technical Certificate
 - Indiana College Care or
 - Advanced industry certificate
- Complete additional work-based learning (total of 950 hours in one or more experiences) that may include, for example:
 - Pre-Apprenticeship
 - Modern Youth Apprenticeship
- Demonstrate skill development in Communication, Collaboration, Work Ethics, and any additional skills determined locally

Earn the Honors Enlistment Seal, plus:

- Complete one of the following:
 - Achieve a score of 50 or higher on the ASVAB
 - Enlistment in ROTC at the collegiate level
 - Acceptance to a service academy
- Demonstrate excellence in leadership through one of the following:
 - Completion of at least 100 hours of public service
 - Holding a leadership role in a co-curricular activity
 - Completion of two courses of a team-based physical sport or activity

in.gov/doe

INDIANA'S READINESS SEALS: PROVIDING STUDENTS A DIRECT PATH TO THEIR FUTURE



ENROLLMENT

Guaranteed Currency:

All seven of Indiana's public colleges and universities are guaranteeing **automatic acceptance** into their school for any student who applies and has successfully earned the honors plus seal. This includes:

Ball State University
Indiana State University
Indiana University
Ivy Tech Community College
Purdue University
University of Southern Indiana
Vincennes University

A growing number of satellite campuses, as well as private colleges and universities have also expressed interest.



EMPLOYMENT

Guaranteed Currency:

Through the help of Ascend Indiana, students who earn the honors plus seal can receive **dedicated career support**, helping them get connected through interviews with and potentially being hired by some of Indiana's top employers, such as:

Community Health Network **Eli Lilly and Company**
CFA Staffing **Parkview Health**
Cummins **Roche Diagnostics**

Students who interview and have completed either the honors or honors plus seal will also be eligible for direct entry into the **Central Midwest Carpenters Union** apprenticeship.

State leaders are also actively working with **Operating Engineers Local 150** to offer similar benefits in connection with their apprenticeship.



ENLISTMENT & SERVICE

Guaranteed Currency:

Students who complete the honors plus seal will be uniquely qualified to join the Indiana National Guard and other military branches. Once accepted into the Indiana National Guard, students can:

- **Earn college credits** for completing training and reduce the time and cost required to complete a degree.
- **Gain direct access** to veteran mentors and military career counselors who can provide college and career guidance.
- **Access priority job placement programs** designed for military professionals, offering job interviews for federal employment and private-sector roles where military experience is highly valued.

THE VALUE OF WORK-BASED LEARNING

Experiences That *Open Doors* for Students

- Sustained interactions (25+ hours)
- Alongside industry professionals
- Real or Simulated Workplace Settings
- Authentic work experience
- Aligned and evaluated with course and training competencies

Benefit to *STUDENTS*

- Connects learning to real life
- Builds confidence and purpose
- Develops employability skills
- Provides real-world experience
- Opens doors to high-demand careers
- Strengthens post-graduation readiness
- Enhances community and employer partnerships

SPOTLIGHT: VALUE OF STUDENT-LED BUSINESSES

- **Easy to fit into student and school schedules**
- **Expands access in communities where opportunities are still growing**
- **Sparks creativity—students design, experiment, & solve community needs**
- **Gives students true ownership of their learning**
- **Provides hands-on experience launching, managing, & growing a business**

COMMON TYPES OF STUDENT-LED BUSINESSES



School-based Enterprises - Student-run business that operates within a school setting; provides goods or services to real customers and conducts ongoing business activities.



Student Entrepreneurial Experiences - Student-developed and -led, with support and mentorship from school staff and industry professionals.

EXAMPLES OF STUDENT-LED BUSINESSES

School-based Enterprises

Example(s) include:

- Eagle Manufacturing - Brown County High School;
- [Bulldog Manufacturing - Orleans High School;](#)
- [Creek Cattle company - Indian Creek High School;](#)
- [Wolverine Enterprises LLC - White River Valley High School](#)

Student Entrepreneurial Experiences

Example(s) include:

- [RISE Program;](#)
- Participating in an entrepreneurship contest, such as [STARTedUP Challenge](#) (Formerly Innovate WithIN)

EXAMPLE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THIS ONGOING WORK

- IDOE's Work-Based Learning Menu of Experiences
 - Includes guidance on WBL definition & examples of high-quality WBL experiences from across the state
- Ascend Indiana's Work-Based Learning Resource Hub
 - Includes a sample training plan
- Diploma Questions? Contact: Rebekah Frazier, rfrazier@doe.in.gov



THANK YOU!