

2018 Annual Report

Indiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council

Per authorizing statute IC 2-5-29, the Council advises the General Assembly on topics related to Indiana youth through the suggestion, endorsement, and advocacy of relevant legislation and policy. The Council is included in the budget of the Indiana Department of Education, supported by grants and donors, and overseen by the Indiana Bar Foundation.

2018-19 Council Session
Eleventh Session of the Council
July 2018 to June 2019

2018 Annual Report
Published November 20, 2018

2018-19 Council Officers
Daniel Medina
Council Chair

Megan Stoner
Policy Chair

Kelby Stallings
Communications Chair

Christian Means
Outreach Chair

2018-19 Membership

Tanner Bowman
Cole Ferguson
Nathan Mertz
Abigail Thomas
Kaden Wood
Vanessa Zhao

Council Advisor

Collin Gruver, J.D.
Director of Civic Education
Programs
Indiana Bar Foundation

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Letter From the Chair

November 20th, 2018

Respected Members of the Indiana General Assembly,

We, the Indiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council, would like to offer our sincere gratitude for spending your time in reviewing the Council's Annual Report.

When the State of Maine established the country's first Legislative Youth Advisory Council in 2002, a new civics movement encouraging youth participation in state government was born. The following years saw numerous state legislatures establish similar youth councils, and the Indiana was no exception to this pattern. Our own assemblymen recognized the need for young Hoosier participation in the affairs of the General Assembly, and established our state's Legislative Youth Advisory Council in 2008.

V **\$** Our council members serve as voices for young Hoosiers in our respective hometowns - and Indiana in its entirety - by advising the General Assembly on relevant policy and legislation. We hope that this Annual Report can provide an insight into the work members dedicate to accomplish this civic duty, as well as provide sufficient arguments for the adoption of policies we believe are of utmost importance.

This Annual Report is delegated to us by our Authorizing Statute (Indiana Code 2-5-29). However, it is not our sole responsibility. Among other methods of advocacy, the Statute requires us, "from time to time", to advise the General Assembly and its standing committees While this political dynamic has waned in recent years, our Council looks forward to re-establishing such a partnership during the upcoming 2019 Legislative Session.

I have no doubt that our Council will capitalize on the great work accomplished this year. We look forward to working with the General Assembly in the 2019 Legislative Session to better the lives of young Hoosiers across the Great State of Indiana.

Cordially,

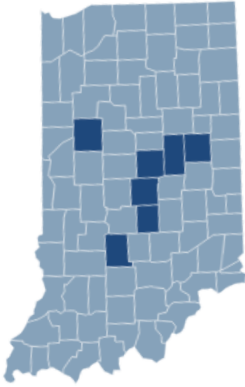


Daniel Medina
Council Chair
Indiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council

Council By the Numbers

*Numbers and figures are accurate as of November 20th, 2018 unless otherwise stated.

Towns and Cities in Counties

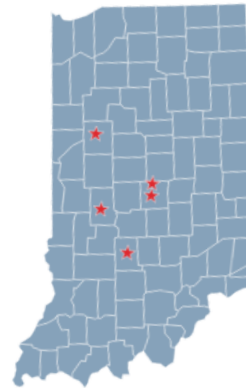


- # , Monroe County
- \$, Hamilton County
- . , Madison County
- 9 Putnam County
- C , Marion County
- V , Delaware County
- v , Johnson County
- %o Hamilton County
- %o Q , Tippecanoe County

Educational Institutions

with of these being

- DePauw University
- Indiana University - Bloomington
- Indiana University-Purdue University: Indianapolis
- Ivy Tech Community College: Indianapolis
- Purdue University
- 4 public high schools
- 1 private high school



Female-Male Ratio



How Old Are We?

By December 31, 2018

- 16 years old -
- 17 years old -
- 18 years old -
- 19 years old -
- 20 years old -

First-Term Members

Second-Term Members

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A Ten Year History of the Council

Key Legislative Events

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2008 Legislative Session of the General
Assembly
N . . . **V** . . .

House Enrolled Act 1162, authored by State Representative Matthew Bell, creates the Council. The resulting Indiana Code is established as the Council's Authorizing Statute (IC 2-5-29).

v **8** **o** . . . **\$**
Indiana Department of Education
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The Council meets for the first time in August 2008. Justin Kingsolver, a Wells Scholar at Indiana University, is elected as the first Council Chair, and Rep. Matthew Bell serves as Council Advisor. The first Annual Report is published in October 2008.

. **o**
2010 Legislative Session of the General
Assembly
N . . . **V** . . .

1. A Dedicated Fund is established to allow for the raising of private funds. [/ . . .
2. Responsibility for Council staffing is moved from the Indiana DOE to the Indiana Bar Foundation.

\$. . . **\$** . . .
N . . .

Rep. Matthew Bell leaves his position as both State Representative and Council Advisor. The position is now ohe Indiana Bar Foundation.

Notable Council Initiatives

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The Council adopts an application process initiative for approximately two years.

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The Council advocates for a national legislative youth council initiative, and publishes an additional "Summer Report" in 2012.

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N . . .

The Council lobbies legislators during Organization Day, and publishes bill endorsements for the 2018 Legislative Session.

N . . . **N** . . . **o** . . . **\$**

The Council adopts a modified application process which facilitates the speed of member appointments, and establishes a website maintained and funded by members ().

Review of the 2018 Calendar Year

2017-2018 Session

Tenth Session of the Council | Aug 2017 to June 2018

O The tenth session of the Indiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council began in August 2017, when elections were held to select Council officers for the 2017-18 year. Cole Ferguson was elected as Council Chair, and served for the entirety of the 2017-18 year until the session adjourned in April 2018.

W C In November 2017, the Council participated in Organization Day, the un-official start to the Legislative Session. In January 2018, following a Council vote, the Council endorsed bills introduced during the 2018 Legislative Session. Both initiatives were the first in the Council's history.

**W \$ ** The Council did not officially run on an academic calendar (July-June) until the 2018-19 year. However, since the establishment of the Council in 2008, the Council had mostly run on a academic calendar, with officer elections held in the summer.

2018-19 Council Session

Eleventh Session of the Council | July 2018 to June 2019

O The eleventh session of the Indiana Legislative Youth Advisory Council began in July 2018, when elections were held to select Council officers for the 2018-19 year. Daniel Medina was elected and currently serves as the Council Chair. The eleventh session of the Council will adjourn in the spring of 2019, shortly after the 2019 Legislative Session of the Indiana General Assembly ends.

W C Council initiatives of the 2018-19 session aim to streamline Council operations. These initiatives include the adoption of an application process that facilitates the speed of new member appointments (a practice not seen since 2012), the addition of new segments to the Annual Report, and the establishment of a dedicated member-run Council website ().

W V Nathan Mertz was appointed by Senate President David Long in July.

9 Josh Bain and Brock Patterson, Legislative Assistants for the Republican Caucus, have been in attendance at all meetings of the 2018-19 session so far (which have been held in July, September, and October at the offices of the Indiana Bar Foundation).

Policy Recommendations for the 2019 Legislative Session

Introduction

For the 2019 Legislative Session, the Council has dedicated on focusing their advocacy work on three (3) topics; these topics are civics, education, and health, respectively. In preparation of said advocacy work, each Council member must be the sponsor of at least one (1) Recommendation for inclusion in this Annual Report.

The following Policy Recommendations are included in this Annual Report, and they are organized by topic, primary sponsor/author, and page number. Two Council members were exempt from publishing a Recommendation due to ethics contracts with their respective employers (the Indiana State House and the United States Senate, respectively).

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*Denotes members who published more than one Recommendation.

Re-Enacting the Council’s Dedicated Fund

Civics | Sponsored by Daniel Medina

Issue

During the 2010 Legislative Session, the Authorizing Statute of the Council (Indiana Code 2-5-29) was amended by Public Law 113. Through the addition of Section 7.5 [Figure 1], a Dedicated Fund was established for the Council. This Dedicated Fund consisted of any “appropriations” made by the General Assembly, as well as any “grants, gifts, and donations intended for deposit in the fund”; and its purpose was to “augment and supplement the funds [already appropriated] by the Department of Education [to support the operation of the Council].”

In summary, the Fund would have allowed for the Council to receive any charitable donations directly, either from the state or from private groups, in a supplement to existing appropriations from the Department of Education. Nevertheless, Section 7.5 was repealed by Public Law 53 in 2014.

Recommendation

The Council recommends re-enacting Section 7.5 of our Authorizing Statute (Indiana Code 2-5-29) in order to re-establish our Dedicated Fund. Such a re-enactment may not have immediate impacts, but it does set the framework for efficient fund-raising measures in the long-term. More specifically, future Council administrations may be able to raise supplementary funds from both private groups, grants, and donations; in addition, appropriations may also be raised from the numerous Council members that have served in the past ten years, many of whom have since established distinguished careers in public policy, education, and law across the State of Indiana.

IC 2-5-29-7.5

Youth advisory council fund

Sec. 7.5. (a) The youth advisory council fund is established as a dedicated fund to be administered by the office. The fund consists of:

- (1) appropriations made to the fund by the general assembly;
- and
- (2) grants, gifts, and donations intended for deposit in the fund.

(b) Expenses of administering the fund shall be paid from money in the fund.

(c) The treasurer of state shall invest the money in the fund not currently needed to meet the obligations of the fund in the same manner as other public money may be invested. Interest that accrues from these investments shall be deposited in the fund.

(d) Money in the fund at the end of a fiscal year does not revert to the state general fund.

(e) Money in the fund is available, with the approval of the budget agency, to augment and supplement the funds appropriated to the department of education to implement this chapter.

As added by P.L.113-2010, SEC.6.

8

Support for Automatic Voter Registration

Civics | Sponsored by Abigail Thomas

Issue

The state of Indiana has seen incredibly low voter turnout, especially among younger populations. According to a political science professor at Indiana University, the voter turnout rate of 18 to 21 year olds in our state is between forty and sixty percent of the voter turnout rate for voters aged 65 years old and above¹. Clearly, this issue with low youth voter turnout must be resolved.

Recommendation

The council recommends the passage of legislation enacting automatic voter registration. When a person applies for their driver's license, they could be automatically registered to vote². This idea has already been implemented in thirteen (13) states and the District of Columbia. The states of Oregon and California,³ were the first and second states, respectively, to enact such policies; notably, the state of Oregon saw voter registration quadruple after enacting their automatic voter registration policy.

This policy would benefit Indiana residents as a whole because many eligible voters can potentially miss the voter registration deadline date. However, if people are automatically registered to vote, remembering registration deadline dates becomes a non-issue. More specifically, however, this policy would benefit young people in Indiana, because many of these people apply for IDs or driver's licenses as they reach the age of majority. As a result, having automatic voter registration policies in place at the time of application will ensure that these young people will have a chance to vote in the future without further paperwork and registration.

¹ Indiana Public Media. "Young voters unlikely to show up in large numbers at the polls". <https://indianapublicmedia.org/news/young-voters-146590/>

² Brennan Center for Justice. "Automatic Voter Registration". <https://www.brennancenter.org/analysis/automatic-voter-registration>

³ National Public Radio. "California Becomes Second State to Automatically Register Voters." Last Modified October 11, 2015. <https://www.npr.org/2015/10/11/447796712/california-becomes-2nd-state-to-automatically-register-voters>

Regarding Standardized Testing

Education | Sponsored by Kelby Stallings

Issue

Today's students are faced with unnecessary stress when it comes to standardized testing in Indiana, due not to the summative test itself, but to the high stakes that standardized tests impose upon educators and schools through the current teacher evaluation and school accountability practices. While we want to ensure schools are held accountable, the resulting pressure for students can create unhealthy learning environments for all students.

One source of this pressure comes from the fact that under current legislation, teacher pay is being affected by their students' results on particular standardized tests, which consequently places greater emphasis on passing tests, rather than focusing on students' actual learning and growth as measured by testing. This unbalanced pressure leads to more stress for both students and educators before a test, because in order to achieve statistically strong numerical results, teachers often have to break from their normal routines and traditional teaching methods to review information, give practice exams, and go over specific topics in preparation for the test. This concept, often known as 'teaching to the test'⁴, is a byproduct of the current setup of standardized testing, and is contrary to the organic concept of education and learning.

A second source of unnecessary pressure is the current 'A' through 'F' school grading system⁵, which places strong emphasis on the seemingly arbitrary score given to schools, who are simply hoping to present a letter grade that corresponds with notions of success, academic excellence, and proficient teaching. In order to yield better enrollment and more funding, schools and educators feel the pressure to either raise their grade or sustain an A rating for a certain number of years. Again, this pressure is in direct opposition to the idea of fostering growth and success for each individual child through competent educators' efforts.

Finally, students face unnecessary pressure because of the current structure of standardized testing. When students understand the implications of their test scores, outside of understanding their own personal growth and educational success, the pressure to perform well increases greatly. Students become stressed mentally and emotionally because they understand that their performance goes beyond consequences for themselves, but that it also affects their teachers and schools. All three of these aspects foster a stressful testing environment, which continues the cycle of poor testing results and stress.

[Continued on Next Page]

⁴ "Standardized Testing." ProCon. <https://standardizedtests.procon.org/>

⁵ Elliott, Scott. "The Basics of A-F Grading in Indiana: Changes and Controversy". Dec 22, 2013. <https://www.chalkbeat.org/posts/in/2013/12/22/the-basics-of-a-to-f-grading-in-indiana/>

Recommendations

The 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) allows for more local flexibility than the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act⁶, and does not require teacher accountability to be linked to test scores. As a result, the Council makes the following recommendations:

- Testing should not be a measure of anything other than student performance and growth.
- Teacher accountability and school grades should not rely on student test-taking abilities. (Other than tests that count towards graduation requirements, there is no accountability for students except the pressure they feel to support their teachers and/or schools). Instead, we recommend that teacher accountability take into consideration students' opinions about the class and teacher, parents' thoughts about their children's teachers and school programs, and teachers' views about their schools' educational operations.

With these changes, teachers who would otherwise be 'teaching to the test' will, by default, diminish in number, creating a more natural and organic learning environment in which students can flourish outside the stress of high stakes standardized testing. The focus of summative tests in Indiana should be in the overall betterment of student education and growth, gaining informative data that can aid and not disrupt natural and beneficial teacher instruction, and to help identify students who are not meeting necessary standards to more specifically address their needs.

⁶ "The Difference Between ESSA and No Child Left Behind." Understood USA. <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/the-difference-between-the-every-student-succeeds-act-and-no-child-left-behind>

Regarding School Resource Officers

Education | Sponsored by Tanner Bowman and Nathan Mertz

Issue

In the last several years, our nation has been plagued by the devastating trend of school shootings. Of the seventy-six (76) incidents of gunfire on school grounds this year⁷, thirty-three (33) of these shootings have resulted in injury or death to a person. One of those high-profile shootings occurred at Noblesville West Middle School in Central Indiana, which resulted in the injury of a student and teacher.

These recent shootings have sparked a call to action for an additional layer of extra security at schools across the nation. One method of defense being used across the nation includes the provision of school resource officers. Resource officers are usually armed guards (bearing tasers and/or firearms), and are tasked with the duty of keeping the school environment safe and controlled for adequate learning.

However, many of the schools that can benefit from a resource officer are stretched for funds; said schools cannot spare the extra money needed for the added security and peace of mind. This leaves a void in safety for many urban low-income schools.

Recommendation

With Governor Holcomb's legislation⁸ allowing schools to receive funding for metal detectors (to be used at the school's discretion), the Council believes providing additional funding for a school resource officer, whose tasks would include running and managing the metal detectors, would provide an extra level of security for urban schools and districts.

The funding would be a small stipend allotted to each school to be used directly and specifically for a resource officer. The stipend, varying in size depending on the specifics of each school's tax base and general fund, would be used to cover a portion (no greater than half) of the salary of the officer. The Council believes that by helping schools struggling to find the funds for an officer, the policy will incentivize the schools enough to put the rest of the money forward to hire a resource officer, taking a step towards instilling safety into their buildings.

⁷ Everytown Support Fund. "Gunfire on School Grounds in the US". Nov 4, 2018. <https://everytownresearch.org/gunfire-in-school/>

⁸ Indiana Department of Administration. "Hand Held Metal Detector Program". July 9, 2018. <https://www.in.gov/idoa/3134.htm>

Enacting Student Media Protection Legislation

Education | Sponsored by Daniel Medina

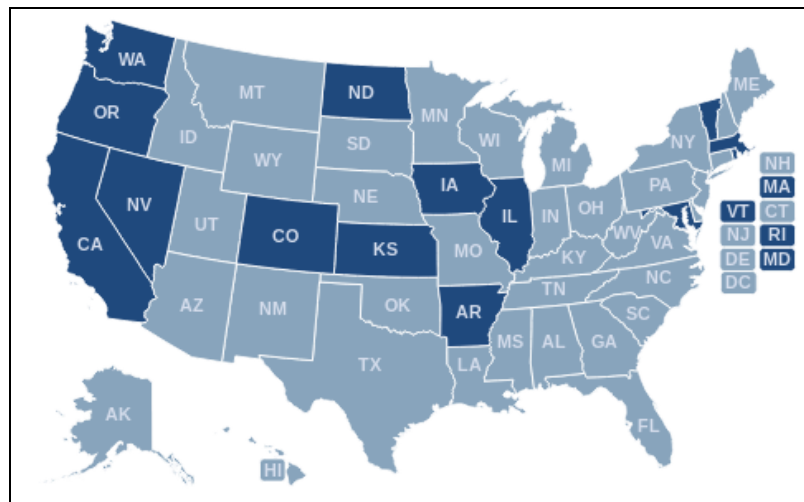
Issue

On the federal level, the rights of student press and journalism are protected by both the First Amendment to the Constitution; this idea was famously re-affirmed by Supreme Court ruling **V** **C** However, the 1988 Supreme Court ruling **@** **O** ***** **P** significantly curtailed these protections when it ruled that school administrators can prevent the publication of student journalism with any “reasonable pedagogical purpose”⁹. This standard is vague and has been used to censor student publications which are critical or even incriminating to their school’s administration; as a result, educational communities are deprived of vital student coverage and representation.

The complications of the **@** ruling can be resolved on the state level through the passage of legislation strengthening student media protections. In the years since **@** was first handed down in 1988, over fourteen (14) states have introduced legislation to strengthen student media protections against administrative censorship [Figure 1].

Recommendation

The 2017 Legislative Session saw a student media protection bill pass the House before failing in the Senate¹⁰; the 2018 Legislative Session saw a similar bill fail in a close 47-45 House vote¹¹. As a result, the Council recommends the re-introduction of student media protection legislation during the 2019 Legislative Session.



S **O**

⁹ **Ä** Hazelwood School District v. Kuhlmeier.” Oyez. 19 Nov. 2018, www.oyez.org/cases/1987/86-836.

¹⁰ Malewitz, Becky. “Student Journalism Protections Die in Indiana Senate.” South Bend Tribune. 19 Apr 2017. https://www.southbendtribune.com/Änews/politics/student-journalist-protections-die-in-indiana-senate/article_cb5004b6-bff0-5f16-ab23-b5f0ee8fe1c2.html

¹¹ “Student journalists Face Censorship.” The Statehouse File. 5 Jul 2018. <http://thestatehousefile.com/protecting-passion-student-journalists-face-censorship/35993/>

Regarding Student Athlete Protection

Health | Sponsored by Christian Means

Issue

Coaches need to understand the severity of summer and fall sports and how heat can affect student athletes. We understand hard work and dedication makes athletes stronger and better, but there is no excuse for students to be passing out and even dying when they are simply following the rules of their superior. As of 2018, Indiana has a score of 46 out of 100 for high school sports heat safety measures¹², meaning Indiana does not take heat safety for student athletes as seriously as we should.

It happens too often that student athletes get sick or die from heat stroke and other heat related problems. Heat related illness or death on school property should be virtually unheard of, however, because exertional heat stroke has a 100% survival rate when treated with cold water.¹³

Recommendation

As a result, the Council recommends that athletic coaches be held responsible for their athletes when it comes to preventable illnesses such as these. We believe that the following suggestions will insure the increased safety of fall and late spring student athletes.

First, coaches should be checked up on periodically after becoming heat prevention certified in order to ensure they are following correct procedures. This is because coaches can sometimes believe that their resolve and intuition is better than those of the people who make and enforce the rules. In addition, no coach should be able to coach students if they haven't completed heat prevention certification. This should urge coaches to get certified as soon as possible. Lastly, coaches should be held responsible if something happens to their athletes. Coaches need to understand how each one of their athletes reacts to heat, for example, and should not discipline them for any extra breaks they might need. Coaches are not only paid to win championships, but also to ensure the safety of their players, and in sum, they should understand these stipulations.

¹² "State High School Sports Safety Policies". Korey Stringer Institute, University of Connecticut. Last modified Aug 13, 2018. <https://ksi.uconn.edu/high-school-state-policies-2018/#>

¹³ Demartini JK, Casa DJ, Stearns R, et al. "Effectiveness of cold water immersion in the treatment of exertional heat stroke at the Falmouth Road Race." *Medicine and science in sports and exercise*. 2015. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24983342>

Establishing a State-Level Crisis Intervention Hotline

Health | Sponsored by Vanessa Zhao

Issue

Indiana ranks 3rd out of 36 states in the percentage of high school students who have seriously considered suicide¹⁴. Although every year Indiana has been making incremental improvements in mental health awareness and programs, it is apparent that our mental health system still requires refinement. Many youth are not reached based on the fragmented system in which youth need to filter through numerous crisis hotline numbers to find the one suited to their needs. Although there are separate suicide and crisis hotlines for each county and one single national hotline, there is currently not one unified single hotline which Indiana youth can reach out for mental health help and/or concerns.

Recommendation

We recommend unifying all county-level hotlines into one state-level hotline for Indiana youth. By having one direct hotline for all of Indiana, we simplify the process and make the system easier to access. One can simply dial the Indiana mental health and suicide prevention hotline and get redirected to help they need as available in the county they reside in. Clearly, we can make youth feel safe through a reliable centralized and simplified hotline system.

Training Teachers to Recognize Vulnerable Students

Health | Sponsored by Vanessa Zhao

Issue

The majority of mental health issues can be treated if detected early enough in children when they are young. In Indiana, however, there are 730 people for every one mental health provider.¹⁵ Clearly, the reality is that young children are not receiving the early help they needed for their mental, emotional and behavioral disorders.

Recommendation

We recommend an annual continued education for teachers regarding mental health in youth, which will help identify early signs of mental disorder in students and refer them to the health services they need. Teachers and parents are the primary caretakers of children and spend the greater part of days with them. We are not fully capitalizing our resources because most teachers have had few if not no training on detecting behavioral change and warning signs of mental health occurring in children.

Mental disorders do not only affect interactions, academics and relationships of youth; they also affect their future in the long term. Teachers are invaluable to us and our children trust them. Making an investment in growing educational awareness in teachers will help us in seeing a big change forward on the improvement of resource and detection of mental and behavioral changes in children.

¹⁴ Indiana Youth Institute. "2018 Indiana Count Databook". Last modified Aug 1, 2018. <http://www.iyi.org/databook>

¹⁵ Ibid.

2018-19 Council Membership Directory

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Indianapolis, Indiana | Marion County
Customized Schooling

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Westfield, Indiana | Marion County
Purdue University

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Muncie, Indiana | Delaware County
DePauw University

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Elwood, Indiana | Madison County
Ivy Tech Community College: Indianapolis

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Trafalgar, Indiana | Johnson County
Brown County High School

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Carmel, Indiana | Hamilton County
Indiana University: Bloomington

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Indianapolis, Indiana | Marion County
Perry Meridian High School

Indianapolis, Indiana | Marion County
Cathedral High School

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Indianapolis, Indiana | Marion County
Southport High School

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