

HOOSIER EDUCATION WIRE

[*New rules proposed for A-F grading*](#)

The State Board of Education on Tuesday moved forward on proposed rules for new guidelines setting A-F grades for Indiana schools. The rules will be released for public comment before final approval in a few months. Information on public hearings will be announced in the coming days. Under the new system, student growth on test scores will be measured by how much they have increased or decreased in a year. The goal is to move students up at least one level every year, even if they don't actually pass the test.

[*Ferebee pitches an IPS 'transformation' plan for troubled schools*](#)

George Washington and Northwest high schools and four elementary feeder schools could be grouped together in a wider turnaround effort that Indianapolis Public Schools is proposing as a way to avoid state takeover when schools get failing grades in the future. Superintendent Lewis Ferebee, told the Indiana State Board of Education a "transformation zone," modeled after a strategy used by Evansville's city school district, could work better and maybe even save money in the long run. The state board is expected to vote on his plan in February.

[*Lawmakers urged to weigh in on online instruction days*](#)

A State Board of Education member renewed his call Wednesday for lawmakers to define what constitutes an instructional day as schools move to replace snow days with online instruction, but he might not get his wish. Senate education committee Chairman Dennis Kruse, R-Auburn, said he hoped the Legislature wouldn't need to get involved in the issue. The Department of Education requires Indiana schools that want to use the virtual option to have technology in every student's hand and ensure that teachers are available to answer questions. Districts also must provide accommodations for students who would normally have assistance in the classroom and provide appropriate learning activities for those with disabilities who don't use online learning platforms. Supporters say the practice will ensure students don't miss critical instructional time ahead of the high-stakes spring ISTEP+ test and will help districts avoid extending the school year to make up missed days.

[*Education board member disses teacher-evaluation system*](#)

The state's teacher-evaluation system came under fire Wednesday, just a couple days after the Department of Education released data that showed roughly 89 percent of educators had been rated in the top two categories. State Board of Education member Gordon Hendry said the ratings are based on a "clearly flawed system" and that "there is no point in having" the rankings if all nearly all teachers are rated so highly. The number of teachers rated in the top categories inched up 1 percentage point from the previous year. But Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz took a different view of the results and sees them as positive. Ritz said Indiana's ratings reflect Indiana educators. "We have highly trained teachers in all over our and I commend our teachers each and every day," she said. State lawmakers are expected to work on changes to the system during the legislative session that began this week.

[Pence to present two-year budget plan focused on education](#)

Gov. Mike Pence said the two-year budget he'll present Thursday to the State Budget Committee will focus on education for Hoosiers of all ages. Pence said he will look to create "expanding opportunities" not only for youth and college students but also for adult through workforce education. He also said his two-year spending proposal – which will likely top \$30 billion – will build on the current performance-based model that distributed \$30 million in teacher bonuses throughout the state and will add additional funding for public charter schools in the state. Watch live here:

<http://www.in.gov/sba/2370.htm>.

[Study Finds Reading to Children of All Ages Grooms Them to Read More on Their Own](#)

Reading aloud through elementary school seemed to be connected to a love of reading generally. According to a report from Scholastic, 41 percent of frequent readers ages 6 to 10 were read aloud to at home, while only 13 percent of infrequent readers were being read to. Although the Scholastic report found that teenagers were more likely to read frequently for fun if they had dedicated independent reading time in school, only 17 percent of all children surveyed reported having time to read a book of their choice at school daily. Just 10 percent of 12- to 14-year-olds and 4 percent of 15- to 17-year-olds reported having that time in class. Such reading time at school may be particularly important for low-income children, who reported that they were more likely to read for fun at school than at home.