

# Indiana’s “Future Accountability Model” is Bad for Hoosier Students

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Indiana recently finalized their new school accountability system. This new system purports to be student centered by creating a unique score for each student based on a variety of measures. However, a closer look reveals this new system instead allows schools to hold students accountable to vastly different standards and limits transparency. This means it will be harder for parents, communities, and policymakers to understand how schools are meeting all students’ needs.

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is asking the U.S. Department of Education for a waiver to let this new system — which violates federal accountability rules — replace its federally compliant system. **We must urge the federal government to say NO to Indiana.**

## Debunking Myths About Indiana’s New Accountability System

**MYTH:** “Provides a simple design that is easy for schools and parents to understand”

**TRUTH:** Schools earn base points for academic achievement (ES/MS) or credit completion (HS), but schools then earn additional points for each student based on completely different skills, including growth in English language arts (ELA) and math, proficiency in science and social studies, attendance, completing a graduation plan, or CTE and advanced coursework. This means **it’s nearly impossible to understand which outcomes are driving a school’s final score.**

**MYTH:** “Encourages schools to focus on improvement for each individual student”

**TRUTH:** This system gives schools the same amount of credit for attendance as it does for above average academic growth, setting a lower bar for students that doesn’t require additional learning. This means **this system encourages schools to focus on the easiest, least rigorous outcomes needed to reach maximum points for each student.**

**MYTH:** “Proficiency is the primary goal”

**TRUTH:** While students in grades 3-8 who reach at or above expectations on state assessments earn more base points for their school than students at approaching or below expectations, the next “steps” in determining a final score undermine the claim that proficiency is the primary goal in a few key ways:

- 1)** In third grade, students at below proficiency in *math* can make up 65 of 100 points by passing the *literacy* assessment, and an additional 10 points for strong attendance. That’s the same base score as students at or above expectations in math. **If passing a literacy screener and showing up to school nearly compensates for low math achievement, proficiency is not the goal of the system — hiding a lack of proficiency is.**
- 2)** In sixth grade, students at “approaching proficiency” in *reading* earn a base of 45 points. They can reach the same base score as a student at or exceeding proficiency by passing their science and social studies tests and having strong attendance. Showing up to school and doing well in other subjects are important outcomes, but **this system uses other outcomes to mask low outcomes in reading and math, rather than counting them separately.**

**MYTH:** “Elevates assessment-based measures in high school”

**TRUTH:** While IDOE added additional test-based success indicators in its final rules, self-reported and **credit-based measures are valued substantially more than valid measures of student learning.**

- In 10th grade, schools earn base points for students not for achieving proficiency in reading or math, but simply by passing their classes. Maximum points can be achieved by passing additional classes and regular attendance. No test-based measure is required in any subject. Once again, proficiency isn’t the goal, **simply passing classes, without any external check on whether these courses are rigorous and preparing students for what’s next, is the goal.**
- In 12th grade, just 10% of a school’s score is based on students meeting proficiency on the SAT. If a school reaches 60% proficiency they earn 100 points, while a school earning 59% proficiency would earn 59 points. **This system both undervalues reading and math proficiency by weighting it far below federal requirements and disincentivizes schools addressing proficiency when as many as 40% of students are below grade level.**

**MYTH:** Scores “reflect the full 12th grade cohort”

**TRUTH:** 80% of a school’s high school score is based *only* on graduates. This means schools have very little incentive to support students at risk of not graduating. **In fact, NOT supporting students at risk of not graduating could increase a school’s score.**