

## A TWENTY YEAR REVIEW: IMPROVEMENT IN INDIANA'S SCHOOLS

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**SUMMARY: To many Hoosiers, the message will come as a surprise: Indiana's public schools clearly improved during the past 20 years. The data are available from the Indiana Department of Education, the College Board, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, Postsecondary Opportunity and ACT, Inc. Performance on ten indicators from 1988-89 through 2008-09 formed the basis for this positive conclusion:**

### 1. ATTENDANCE RATE

\*Hoosier public schools have successfully raised daily attendance in 15 of the past 20 years to the highest level in our state's history, **96.1%**.

### 2. GRADUATION RATE

\*A new method shows **81.5% graduated in four years or less in the Class of 2009**, up from 77.8%, 76.4%, and 76.1% in the last three cohorts using the new method.

\*The **dropout rate was 8.7% for the Class of 2009**, improving from 10.3%, 11.9% and 11.2% in three previous years of the new system which tracks every student.

### 3. SAT VERBAL SCORES

\*Verbal scores rose from 490 in '88-'89 to an historic high of 504 in 2004-05.

\*Since then, a revised SAT shows Reading and Writing scores separately.

Reading has fallen to **496 in 2008-09**, down from 498 in 2005-06. Writing has fallen to **480 in 2008-09**, down from 486 in 2005-06.

\*These scores came while **Indiana tested 63% of all graduates, 17% more than the nation** as a whole, thus giving more marginal students a chance at college.

### 4. SAT MATH SCORES

\*Math scores on the old SAT went up from 487 in '88-'89 to 508 in 2004-05, another top performance in state history.

\*In the four years of the revised SAT, Indiana scored 509, 507, 508 and **507** respectively, maintaining a high performance level on a more difficult test.

### 5. ACT COMPOSITE SCORES

\*Indiana's composite score on the ACT rose to **22.2 in 2008-09**, the highest mark in state history. Indiana ACT scores have exceeded national averages in all 20 years of the study.

### 6. NATIONAL ASSESSMENT (NAEP) SCORES

\*On National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) basic scores, **Indiana outperformed the nation on all 35 NAEP assessments since 1990.**

\*On the NAEP proficient standard, Indiana outperformed the nation on 27 of 35 tests.

### 7. ISTEP ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS SCORES

\*In 54 year-to-year comparisons over 11 years and 8 grades, **24 (44%) went up, 17 (31%) went down, and 13 (24%) stayed the same.** More went up than down by a clear margin.

### 8. ISTEP MATH SCORES

\*In 54 valid year-to-year comparisons, **31 (57%) went up, 12 (22%) remained stable, and 11 (20%) went down**, showing a clear trend of improvement.

### 9. PERCENT OF HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES GOING TO COLLEGE

\*The percent of graduates aspiring to go to college went up 19 of the 20 years to reach **76.9% in 2008-09, the highest level in state history.**

**10. STUDENTS EARNING ACADEMIC HONORS OR CORE 40 DIPLOMAS** \*For all 20 years of the study, more students every year earned the 47-credit Academic Honors Diploma, reaching a total of **30.9% in 2008-09, while a record 43.0%** earned the Core 40 diploma.

**CONCLUSION: Improvement is clear. The data show that public schools in Indiana have improved more than is widely believed.**