



Indiana State Board of Education  
Room 225 State House  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2798

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Indiana Educators and Other Interested Persons

**FROM:** Dr. Tony Bennett, Superintendent of Public Instruction

**DATE:** February 6, 2009

**SUBJECT:** Approval of Blanket Waivers and Initiation of Rulemaking Process to Facilitate Student-Centered Learning

At its meeting on February 4, 2009, the Indiana State Board of Education began the process of granting flexibility to schools to help them focus on student-centered learning. Some of the changes will take place immediately through blanket waivers. These waivers are granted under the Board's nonstandard program approval authority, which allows the Board to approve programs that differ from those authorized or required by the Board's rules in ways such as content, organization, methods, staffing, course title, instructional materials, or criteria for course or program completion.

Some of the changes will not be effective until rules are changed. We will notify interested persons of the public hearing schedule for the rule changes and invite testimony at that time.

These waivers are immediately available, with no need to submit an application or waiver request:

I. Schools may waive the definition of "credit" to the extent that students must complete a course that includes a minimum amount of instruction. This allows schools to award credit based on demonstration of proficiency against the academic standards in a course that meets the following requirements:

- The course is an approved course listed in 511 IAC 6.1-5.1, and the course complies with the approved course description.
- For those courses for which Indiana Academic Standards are defined, the course is consistent with the defined standards.
- The Board's proposed rule provides that the required proficiency is at or greater than that required to pass the Core 40 end-of-course assessment for those courses for which there is a Core 40 end of course assessment with identified passing scores.

The Board's rules always have required students to be proficient before receiving credit, but the credit definition prevented a school from awarding credit until the student had been enrolled for a semester. This change replaces seat time with proficiency.

2. Schools may utilize a Registered Nurse who does not hold a Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree to coordinate school health services.

3. Educational Service Center employees are required to hold a license issued by the Department of Education only if they perform work that otherwise requires a license, like teaching a class.

In addition to the above, which also will be the subject of rulemaking, the following rule changes are proposed:

GED – Eliminate the waiting period required of an examinee that has incomplete results.

ISTEP – Make the following changes:

- Revise the rule to coincide with current policy.
- Add language for alternate assessment based on modified achievement standards.
- Repeal obsolete definitions related to the Graduation Qualifying Examination (GQE).
- Phase out, as required by statute, the provision that allows a student to graduate without passing the GQE by successfully completing Core 40 waiver.
- Repeal obsolete definition of Grade 10 related to the GQE.

Student Services – Repeal the recommended staff-student ratios.

Student-Staff Ratios – Make the following changes:

- Repeal building average student-teacher ratio.
- Repeal student-administrator ratio.

Instructional Time and Curriculum – Make the following changes:

- Adopt the flexible Kindergarten, elementary, and middle school curriculum rules previously proposed by the Board.
- Repeal the high school course list as a rule and replace it with the Indiana Academic Standards and Indiana State Approved Course Titles and Descriptions. This will allow the Department and Board to authorize new courses much more quickly than in the past.
- \* • Provide flexibility to adapt the high school physical education requirement for students who demonstrate proficiency through other means.
- Repeal the requirement for a student to attend high school for seven semesters.

Although these changes require rulemaking, flexibility may be available immediately. Schools are encouraged to review the Board's December 14, 2007, *Open Letter to Indiana Educators* and its *Network Model School Flexibility Policy*. Please contact Jeff Zaring at 317-232-6622 or [jzaring@doe.in.gov](mailto:jzaring@doe.in.gov) if you have questions.