



# **CENTER FOR URBAN AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION**

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**INDIANA UNIVERSITY**

School of Education  
IUPUI

## **Recent School Reform Efforts and Examples of Success in IPS**

A Research Brief

Center for Urban and Multicultural Education

Indiana University School of Education

Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis

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## Recent School Reform Efforts in IPS

### Introduction

The purpose of this report is to describe some of the major initiatives that the Indianapolis Public School (IPS) system has undertaken in the past decade and to highlight schools that have enjoyed a measure of success. We situate the reforms within the context of the work of two leading education scholars, present the changing demographic landscape IPS has experienced over the past ten years, and briefly describe several reforms and successful school models.

IPS is the largest school district in the state of Indiana. During the 2010-2011 school year there were approximately 32,200 students enrolled in 64 schools spread throughout the city of Indianapolis. Of the students enrolled, 77% were students of color, 83% qualified for free or reduced lunch, 22% received special education services, and 14% were students with limited English proficiency. Table 1 displays the changes in school organization, enrollment totals, and demographic shifts from 2000 – 2011. There are now far fewer schools in the district and the school composition has shifted from primarily comprehensive high schools (grades 9-12) with feeder middle schools (grades 6-8) toward community schools (grades 7-12) and magnet schools. The number of elementary buildings (K-6) has decreased from 55 to 47. The district demographics have changed over the past decade. The percentage of English Language Learners, students receiving special education services, and students qualifying for free/reduced lunch has substantially increased. The graduation rates are not comparable across the decade as the state changed from a status rate to a cohort rate. Similarly, comparing achievement across the decade is not reliable as the content and timing (spring to fall administration) of the tests have changed.

Table 1.

*IPS Enrollment, Demographics, and Achievement 2000 to 2011*

	<b>2000-01</b>	<b>2010-11</b>
<b>Schools</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2010</b>
K-6 Elementary schools	55	47
6-8 Middle schools	19	3
Grade 7-12 Schools	0	5
K-12 Schools	5	1
9-12 High schools	8	3
Alternative schools	21	3
<i>Total Schools</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>64</i>
<b>Enrollment</b>		
Total enrollment	41,008	32,197
<b>Demographics</b>		
Percent of minorities to total enrollment	66%	77%
Single parent households	54%	72%
Percent of students enrolled in Special Education	16%	22%
Percentage of students with limited English proficiency	3%	14%
Percentage of students receiving free/reduced lunch	71%	83%
<b>Attendance and Achievement</b>		

Graduation rate	92%	58%
Attendance rate	94%	93%
Percentage of 3 <sup>rd</sup> grade students passing Math and English ISTEP	39%	49%
Percentage of 6 <sup>th</sup> grade students passing Math and English ISTEP	17%	47%
Percentage of 8 <sup>th</sup> grade students passing Math and English ISTEP	27%	32%
Percentage of 10 <sup>th</sup> grade students passing Math and English ISTEP (2000-01 and ECA 2010-11)	23% (ISTEP)	28% (ECA)

## Urban Education Reform Framework

It is relatively easy to highlight the various urban school reform initiatives in the United States and their parameters, objectives, and overall gains. The more difficult task is to identify the reasons why these reforms were successful and to pinpoint exactly how the effective reforms were designed, implemented, replicated, and sustained. The remainder of the paper defines several major attempts at school reform in IPS. The distinction between the “what” of a reform and the “how” of its implementation is vitally important when discussing urban school reform. In Diane Ravitch’s (2010) book *The Death and Life of the Great American School System: How Testing and Choice are Undermining Education*, she suggests that contemporary reforms are misguided. She laments our obsession with management/organizational fads, false promises of single innovations, and that increased testing of basic competency in math/reading will be synonymous with a more educated citizenry. Instead she reminds us that changes in the depth and content of curriculum and the capacity of the school to deliver it deserve increased attention. She uses her experience with *Balanced Literacy*, a comprehensive approach to literacy that spans multiple subjects, as a cautionary tale. She identified challenges as reform models move into other school districts. As opposed to growing from within, school leaders may feel forced or mandated to implement the reforms that had been developed in another “successful district.” This occurred when balanced literacy reforms were brought back to the New York Public Schools on a much larger scale. Because reformers were more focused on the packaged product instead of a process, little to no positive results emerged. Additionally, teachers were alienated, community members frustrated, and both groups were skeptical of future reform endeavors (Ravitch, 2010). Indeed, this speaks to a larger pattern of more failures than successes due to trying to impose reforms on a district or school, instead of developing them from within (Tyack & Cuban, 1995).

Those engaged in urban school reform can profit from these lessons. It is essential to consider the context of the school, spend ample time engaged in the process of change, and set reasonable benchmarks for determining success. Payne (2008) points to what he coined the “Big 6” for effective school reform:

- *Instructional time protected or extended*
- *Intellectually ambitious instruction*
- *Professional community (teachers collaborate, have a collective sense of responsibility)*
- *Academic press combined with social support*
- *Program coherence (i.e., institutional focus; “Are we all on the same page?”), and*
- *Teacher “quality” / diagnostic ability (p. 94).*

These characteristics support a collaborative process that values the input of all stakeholders and results in greater buy-in from not only teachers and administrators, but community members as well. This has the potential to create a school or district that contains, and is surrounded by, supportive education professionals that foster a learning environment in which students feel supported and accountable to their community and peers. With this framework as a backdrop, we now briefly describe some of the major reform initiatives over the past 10 years.

## **Reform Efforts in IPS**

**American Student Achievement Institute (InSAI) Process:** Beginning in 2005, IPS partnered with the Indiana Student Achievement Institute (InSAI), a non-profit organization that “assists schools with the process of change for the purpose of raising student achievement and closing achievement gaps” (American Student Achievement Institute, 2011). InSAI provided leadership training workshops on school improvement strategies, technical support and resources, and access to an online school improvement management system. An annual survey was completed by teachers, students, and families in order to identify areas of strength and areas needing attention in the coming year. The InSAI process helps schools comply with PL221 (Indiana’s accountability system for K12 education), develop school improvement plans, and set priorities for implementing strategies that will raise academic achievement. A teacher leader is identified for each major school improvement strategy in the building. They are responsible for monitoring professional development and reporting the efficacy of implementation.

**Curriculum Mapping:** In 2010 and 2011, IPS offered professional development to Visual Arts and Social Studies teachers on new pacing / consensus maps developed for these subject areas. These pacing / consensus maps were developed by grade level and / or subject area committees of teachers to guide all teachers within that particular content area or grade level regarding the appropriate pace and content of instruction for a given school year. The district has offered all teachers professional development and one-on-one support in the use of Rubicon Atlas Mapping software, which allows teachers to prepare individual curriculum maps that serve as their weekly lesson plans. Submission of weekly plans through Rubicon is required for language arts, math, vocal music, visual arts, social studies, world languages, and physical education teachers. The Atlas software makes this data available to others within the district through an analytics feature, thus enabling teachers to view other teachers’ plans within the district and allowing administrators and district staff to collect data on the pacing and implementation of curriculum.

**Benchmarking:** Acuity®-designed and scored diagnostic tests in language arts, mathematics, and science are given to students across the district four times per year. These tests are aligned to state standards and the IPS pacing / consensus map. In preparation for these benchmark tests, teachers and students participate in a 30-day instructional cycle that includes nine days of district-provided “bell ringers,” which are typically short multiple choice exercises, followed by a “scrimmage,” which is a short multiple choice test. After the scrimmage, classes participate in five days of review and reflection, and then the cycle of bell ringers, scrimmage, and review begins anew. After each district benchmark test, teachers meet during Structured Teacher Planning Time (STPT) to examine the scores and plan strategies for improvement. Scores on district benchmark assessments are also used to assess the efficacy of various programs and initiatives, such as the Over/Under Program which provides accelerated curriculum for students who are over-age for their grade level.

**School Configuration:** While magnet schools have a long history in IPS, recent years have seen a significant expansion in the district’s magnet school offerings. In the fall of 2010, IPS introduced its newest magnet school, Harshman Middle School for Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). In 2012, it will create a new magnet high school to receive students from its Center for Inquiry, Montessori, and Gifted and Talented magnet elementary programs. At the same time, IPS initiated a full service community school approach in several of its seventh through 12<sup>th</sup> grade schools to meet the “needs of the whole student, including academic, physical, and social” needs (IPS LEA Improvement Plan, 2009). Starting in the fall of 2011, Gambold Middle School will be merged with Northwest High School, making Northwest Community High School the latest addition to a list that includes Howe, George Washington, Broad Ripple and Arlington Community Schools. The expansion of Magnet School options and Community Schools in secondary education emerged after small schools failed to take hold in the district. Small schools were a collaborative effort facilitated by the Center for Excellence in Leadership of Learning (CELL) at University of Indianapolis and supported by funding from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. The comprehensive high school was divided into several themed learning communities led by academic deans. The goal was to foster a sense of community, create closer student-teacher relationships, and provide engaging learning opportunities according to students’ interests in the respective theme.

**Professional Development:** When IPS received a significant financial award through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), it launched an ambitious professional development program designed to impact mathematics and language arts instruction, instructional technology usage, and special education. Over a two-year period, it drew together district teachers and school staff for training while a cadre of licensed teachers replaced them in their classrooms. Prior to ARRA, instructional coaches in math, science, and literacy were available to support teachers. Coaches worked with content directors to design and deliver workshops on district-wide strategies and curricula during professional development days, model instruction in individual classrooms, conduct classroom observations, and provide resource materials. As professional development days were removed from the academic calendar, schools used Structured Teacher Planning Time (STPT) and Professional Learning Communities for in-house professional development. Topics and sessions are developed by principals and teacher leaders in conjunction with content directors.

**Parent Involvement:** The district’s public schools use several strategies to engage parents. Each IPS school employs a parent liaison and houses a parent center. Parent liaisons attempt to build positive links between school and home by “conducting home visits, staffing parent centers, distributing *NCLB* information, administering surveys about the family friendliness of schools, informing parents about their children's performance (both good and bad), providing training on parenting skills, and supplying information about how families can meet their basic needs” (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). Parent liaisons at some IPS schools also plan and host family-friendly events in an effort to draw parents to the schools.

**Response to Intervention (RTI):** Response to Intervention, sometimes called Response to Instruction, refers to “a combination of high quality, culturally and linguistically responsive instruction, assessment, and evidence-based intervention” in order to identify and address student learning and behavioral difficulties and disabilities (National Center on Response to Intervention, 2011). RTI has become a popular framework, in part because the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA

permits students to be assessed for special education eligibility through their response to scientifically-based interventions. IPS initiated the use of a multi-tiered Response to Intervention framework in all schools beginning in the 2009-2010 school year through training for a handful of school staff from each school, including Title I teachers and school psychologists. Over the 2010-2011 school year, a cadre of 12 special education teachers visited schools to assist with the implementation of the new model. Schools provided multi-tiered instruction and set up multi-disciplinary Building Based Teams to review referrals, establish intervention plans, and evaluate students' responses to the interventions. The overall goals are to increase student access and success in the general education curriculum, reduce referrals to special education, increase professional collaboration and data-based decision making, and increase the effectiveness of interventions.

**Balanced Literacy:** In general, “balanced literacy” refers to literacy instruction that includes both immersion in authentic, holistic reading and writing experiences as well as targeted, skill-building mini lessons and modeling components (see Metsala & Wharton-McDonald, 1997). IPS transitioned to a Balanced Literacy approach in eight low-performing schools beginning in 2010. Balanced literacy was already used in at least one of its highly successful magnet programs. The district provided professional development during the summer and the school-year for teachers in grades four, five, and six. Literacy coaches visited the schools to view implementation of the new approach and design professional development sessions that responded to areas in which teachers needed support. Mid-year trainings generally covered Interactive Read-Alouds, shared and guided reading, writing mini-lessons and teaching points, and the assessment of student reading and writing. In one of the mid-year sessions, teachers responded that because the program gave students greater choice and flexibility in what to read and write, the program increased student motivation.

### **Special Education Reform Initiatives**

**Full Purpose Partnership/Systems of Care Schools:** Full Purpose Partnership (FPP) is a strength based, family focused philosophy that utilizes data collection to determine appropriate services for all students and families, including students with disabilities. The twelve IPS FPP schools have a focused plan to support the academic and behavioral needs of all students, with specific services for those with more intense needs (e.g., those with significant behavioral support needs). This model has been nationally recognized as a best practice model for positive support of students and families.

**Kaleidoscope:** This program includes twelve teams of master's level social workers and behavioral specialists who receive referrals from schools that have students in danger of being removed from the school setting due to disruptive behavior. The teams work collaboratively with school staff to provide embedded professional development in the classroom and in the student's home to develop and implement a plan to address student issues.

**Arches Transition Program:** This program prepares students to make informed decisions regarding future work, living arrangements, social life, lifelong learning opportunities, leisure time and other aspects of quality adult living. Person-centered planning is used to guide the development of transition plans. It is designed for students who are struggling with the academic requirements of a high school diploma and are in need of post high school support due to the degree of their disability.

**Project SEARCH Transition Program:** Project SEARCH is an employment program for individuals with disabilities that is nationally recognized for innovative practices and presents a unique employer-driven model. The project is based at Community East Hospital Medical Center. It involves collaboration among Community Health, IPS, and Easter Seals Crossroads (a community rehabilitation program). All students are eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services and are between the ages of 18-21. This school-to-work transition program takes place entirely at the workplace at Community East hospital with support and instruction provided by an IPS teacher and paraprofessional, a Crossroads Training Specialist / Job Coach, and Community Health staff.

**Project SITE:** SITE is a university based transition program for students with disabilities, ages 18-21. The goal of the SITE program is to support young adults to successfully move from high school to adult life, including employment and post-secondary education. The program is based at IUPUI and is operated by IPS in collaboration with the School of Education.

In summary, reform efforts in IPS have attended to Payne's (2008) "Big 6" components of effective school reform. Significant efforts have been made to ramp up the quality of instruction through extensive professional development efforts. Structures have been put in place to engage teachers to implement 'best practices' and to support students and their families. Most recently, the district moved to a year-round calendar in order to reduce summer learning loss and increase remedial and enrichment opportunities.

With such an ambitious reform agenda, major challenges include alignment and integration of efforts and appropriate implementation. The next section describes examples of schools that have demonstrated success in their reform efforts.

### **Examples of Success in Indianapolis Public Schools**

In this section we highlight successful schools and initiatives in the Indianapolis Public Schools. Based on informal interviews and conversations with key leaders, teacher leaders, and former administrators in IPS, we review the history, key elements, and evidence of success. The schools represent magnet, neighborhood and innovative program options at various grade levels. Discussions with key IPS stakeholders provided insight into why initiatives took hold at certain schools. The general consensus was that it worked in buildings where administrators were an integral part of the implementation of a few key initiatives or where niche programs were allowed flexibility to innovate, grow, and given ample time for their ideas to flourish. This differed from other schools that felt continual pressure to introduce new programs and comply with numerous mandates. This is not to say the successful schools had no obligation to the district or district mission, but rather they embedded elements into their curriculum and operations that made sense in the context of their school-based mission and the needs of their students and teachers. In essence, successful schools operated with an even balance of autonomy and support of the larger IPS mission. They had strong leaders but also strong teacher leaders. Not surprisingly, staff worked very long hours, participated in study groups outside of the working hours, and spent considerable time after school working with students and families in order to do what was needed to effect change. This paper presents examples of successful schools in IPS.

## Center for Inquiry

The Center for Inquiry (CFI) is an IPS magnet program that was created by a group of teachers and IU/IUPUI faculty members in 1994. Working together for a year before submitting their proposal, this group of educators had a vision of a school that would feature inquiry-based learning, holistic reading and writing at the center of the curriculum, and an emphasis on collaborative learning. The original program began as an experiment in one hallway of an existing elementary school that had empty classrooms.

The stated purpose of the magnet program was to provide attractive choices to parents and stem the tide of students moving from the IPS district to the suburbs. As one of several magnet programs, the CFI became popular among parents very quickly and there was always a long waiting list for entry into the school. In response to parental demand for spaces in the program, administrators expanded it to a second and then a third school in different areas of the IPS district. Also to meet parental requests, the program was expanded to include a middle school in each building. As of fall 2011, the CFI program consists of three K-8 schools and plans are underway for a new CFI high school to open in fall 2012 on the site of the current Gambold Middle School.

The original CFI (IPS #2) was the first in the state to be certified to offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at the primary-middle school level. Since then, the second CFI (IPS #84) has also achieved this accomplishment and the same goal is being actively pursued by the third CFI (IPS #27). To provide continuity as students progress through the various grade levels, the new CFI high school is being planned with an IB focus as well. To be eligible for IB status, schools must meet rigorous national and international standards and provide evidence that they provide a "relevant, engaging, challenging and significant educational framework for all children."

The IB curriculum fits well with the program's emphasis on authentic inquiry and the belief that students should have choices about what they will learn and how they will learn it. Instead of delivering scripted or packaged lessons that were designed by outside companies, CFI teachers build curriculum that responds to student interests. This keeps motivation for learning strong.

A second key element and possible reason for program success is the school's emphasis on authentic literacy learning. CFI students enjoy a rich selection of multicultural children's and adolescent literature that engage student interest. Teachers are not required to teach reading or writing through commercial programs that emphasize isolated skills over engagement in texts of high interest. While many schools focus on *raising test scores*, CFI schools focus on *raising readers*.

The Exemplary Reading Program Award was offered by the International Reading Association for the first time in 1999 with the goal of identifying and honoring the best reading programs in the country. Only one program was chosen for each state that entered the competition. In May 2000 the Center for Inquiry received this distinction for the state of Indiana. In September 2009, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan named the Center for Inquiry as a National Blue Ribbon School-- one of 314 schools nationwide and the only school in the Indianapolis area to receive this honor. The award recognizes schools that are academically superior or have made dramatic gains in student achievement and helped close gaps in achievement among minority and

disadvantaged students. The program has a national reputation and receives many visitors every year.

### **Crispus Attucks Medical Magnet High School**

Crispus Attucks High School, the first segregated all-black high school in Indianapolis, has a storied history in Indiana. It became a middle school in 1993 due to declining enrollments, but was reconstituted as a medical magnet high school in 2006. Each year a grade was added so that it now spans grades 6-12. As a magnet school, it serves students who may be interested in medical or science professions and/or who desire an early college experience. According to their website, “The Medical Magnet Program features a “classical” and accelerated curriculum, with high school classes beginning in the middle grades, which lead to Advanced Placement, Honors, and college coursework opportunities for high school students” (<http://www.schools.ips.k12.in.us/schooldetail.php?num=418>). Students must maintain a satisfactory GPA or face removal from the school and reassignment to their neighborhood school.

A formal Memorandum of Understanding was signed in 2007 between IPS and IUPUI, allowing students to enroll in on-campus 100- and 200-level courses. Students are expected to earn an Indiana Academic Honors Diploma and complete a minimum of three semesters of internships in sites such as hospitals and other health care settings. IUPUI awards up to \$250,000 in tuition scholarships to CAMMHS juniors and seniors engaged in dual credit coursework on campus. Students can take up to 17 credits tuition free, totaling over 900 credit hours since 2008. Enrollment numbers have increased steadily, with 54 students enrolled in IUPUI courses for fall 2011.

In addition to the early college feature, CAMMHS uses inquiry-based instruction within a curriculum that has been mapped across grades 6-12. Extensive support is provided to students through a Student Learning Center, which is open before school and after school until 6 pm. The school also features a growing program offering international travel experiences. The first graduating class of CAMMHS was in the spring of 2010. All of the students graduated on time, and all have pursued higher education. According to Magnet Schools of America, Attucks is one of the finest medical magnet high schools in the United States.

### **George Washington Community High School (GWCHS)**

George Washington was closed in 1995 due to shrinking enrollments. Under the leadership of neighborhood resident Danny Fugate, a grassroots movement formed the Westside Education Task Force (WETF). Principals, teachers, and other educators met with parent, neighborhood leaders, university faculty, service providers, and faith-based representatives to urge decision-makers to reopen the school. Deeply committed to fundamental changes, the group addressed the complex social, economic, and educational challenges faced by their students and families, and recommended a community school model and a strengths-based approach for the new school. In the fall of 2000, the George Washington Community School reopened as a middle school and added a new grade each year thereafter.

In the last ten years, the community school has demonstrated significant accomplishments and has been recognized by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, MetLife Foundation, Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the KnowledgeWorks Foundation as an exemplary model. In 2006, the school received the inaugural National Community School Award from the Washington, D.C.-based Coalition for Community School. In the fall of 2008, the lead agency, the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center, was one of 10 agencies to receive the nation's first full-service community schools funding by the U.S. Congress through the U.S. Department of Education. The five-year \$2.4 million grant expands after-school and community programs, parent engagement, and provides funding for an external evaluation.

George Washington is a national model for community schools. In 2009 GWCHS was one of eight schools nationwide featured in the report "Raising Graduation and College Going Rates" issued by the Coalition for Community Schools and the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Washington is the first case study outlined in the report, which points out that the school has raised its attendance from 88 percent to 96.2 percent in just two years, and that 100 percent of the school's 2009 graduates pursued post secondary education. The report also notes: "At many sites--particularly Indianapolis, Portland, Chicago, and Tukwila--school superintendents have championed community school efforts, providing invaluable support as public advocates and district partners" (Axelroth, 2009, p. 3).

Also in 2009, a new book, "New Directions for Youth Development: Universities in Partnership Strategies for Education, Youth Development, and Community Renewal," was published that features a chapter on GWCHS and an analysis of its partnership network, including Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis.

### **New Tech at Arsenal Technical High School**

New Tech High was created as a small school within Arsenal Technical High School during the 2007-2008 academic year. Arsenal Technical High School was one of the first schools in Indiana to adopt the New Tech reform model. Currently, in the fifth year of implementation, all students (freshmen-senior) within the small school participate in the New Tech model. According to their website, "New Tech High @ Arsenal Tech focuses on citizenship, work ethic, presentation skill, critical thinking, and collaboration" (<http://www.nthaindy.org/>).

The mission of the New Tech model is to prepare students to be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by providing them with necessary knowledge and skills using a project-based instructional approach. The New Tech model consists of six primary components: school culture and autonomy, curriculum and instruction, technology, partnership development, student outcomes, and professional culture. School culture focuses on creating a professional environment where all students and facilitators exhibit the core tenets of trust, respect, and responsibility. In the instructional approach of project-based learning students work collaboratively in groups to research, learn, and create projects that offer solutions to authentic problems. The infusion of technology within New Tech provides students with a one-to-one student to computer ratio, as well as digital and online tools, and allows them the opportunity to obtain knowledge from additional sources rather than a more traditional approach where the teacher is the sole provider of knowledge. In the New Tech model, facilitators and school administrators work diligently to incorporate professionals from the community such as university professors, local business owners, and parents to create authentic real world problems for students to solve in their courses.

The professional culture includes emphasizing the components mentioned above as well as working collaboratively with facilitators, administrators, students, and community members to co-create the New Tech model at New Tech High.

### **Full-Purpose Partnership Schools in IPS**

In June 2003, a new partnership was created between IPS, Choices, Inc., PassWord Community Mentoring, IUPUI and IPS Schools 37, 78, and 20. The original idea was to bring systems of care and a full service school philosophy and approach into schools. The mission of the Full-Purpose Partnership (FPP) is “To provide Full-Purpose schools where everyone belongs.” The unique vision is to create a culture within schools where all kids feel accepted, parents are involved and all necessary supports and resources for academic and behavioral success are accessible. The foundation for a Full-Purpose Partnership has four components including an engaging curriculum, school-wide positive behavior supports, systems of care principles, and inquiry driven decision making. Other essential elements include parent involvement, professional development, purposeful participation, evidence-based practice, and continuous improvement.

Today there are 11 FPP schools in IPS. Three central office staff support the schools and offer professional development, and each FPP school has a full time Behavior Specialist. Ongoing evaluation is conducted. Successful implementation of FPP has been associated with fewer discipline issues, as well as steady increases in student scores on benchmark assessments and ISTEP+.

### **Summary**

Throughout the past decade the Indianapolis Public Schools have experienced significant demographic shifts in student population. The percentage of English Language Learners, students receiving special education services, and students qualifying for free/reduced lunch has substantially increased, as has the percentage of minorities and single family households in the district. Shrinking enrollments and budgets have caused the district to close schools and redefine itself. No other Indianapolis district has faced the scope and depth of such challenges.

IPS has undertaken numerous reform initiatives and developed multiple magnet programs. In doing so, the district has encountered the challenges of going to scale with these change efforts. Each initiative requires adequate time to take hold, and layering too many initiatives can cause problems with the efficacy of implementation and the overall cohesion of the efforts.

Conversely, the most successful schools appear to have incorporated many of Payne’s Big 6 elements of effective school reform and, as a result, have achieved national acclaim. The next decade is crucial for IPS and other urban school districts. It is our hope that continued dialogue between schools, colleges/universities, members of the community, and politicians reflects a collaborative effort to meet the diverse needs of our students in all school settings.

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