

**Indiana Department of Education
100 N Senate Ave
Indianapolis, IN 46204**

Dear Members of the Indiana Department of Education,

As a parent deeply invested in my and all child's education, I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed changes to Indiana's high school diploma structure. While I appreciate the intention to modernize education and provide more flexibility, I am concerned about the negative impacts these changes will have on our students.

The introduction of the GPS Diploma and GPS Diploma Plus seems to prioritize early career tracking at the expense of a well-rounded academic foundation. Forcing students to choose pathways so early in their high school careers could limit their exposure to a variety of subjects, including music and the arts, which are essential for fostering creativity, critical thinking, and a well-rounded education.

The removal of the Academic Honors diploma and the reduction in math, social studies, and fine arts requirements is troubling. This shift not only reduces the rigor that has prepared countless students for college but also strips away the choices that allow students to tailor their education to their interests and future aspirations. As highlighted by educators and experts, these changes could particularly disadvantage students aiming for college admission, especially to in-state institutions like Indiana and Purdue Universities, which have specific academic requirements the new diplomas simply will not meet.

The proposed work-based learning components, while valuable, also raise concerns. Many schools, particularly in rural areas, may lack the resources to provide sufficient opportunities for all students. This could lead to disparities in educational outcomes, with students in less resourced areas struggling to meet these new requirements.

Arts education, in particular, stands to suffer under this new framework. The arts are not just elective courses; they are critical to the holistic development of students, enhancing their academic performance, emotional well-being, and social skills. By making these courses optional, the proposed changes risk undermining the high-quality impact that arts education has on students' overall growth. It is concerning Indiana is looking to diminish these programs while other states are adding fine arts seals to their diplomas.

I urge you to reconsider these changes and seek solutions that maintain academic rigor, preserve student choice, and ensure equitable access to a comprehensive education for all students across Indiana. Our children deserve an education that prepares them for a variety of future paths, not one that prematurely narrows their options. If we are to prepare our students for the future careers that are yet to exist we must not only prepare for the jobs that are here now and may not be here in twenty years.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

**Dr. James Weaver
Parent and student advocate
Plainfield, IN
Students in 12th, 11th, and 6th grade**