IPS REBUILDING STRONGER

DECEMBER 2021

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & COMMITMENTS TO OUR COMMUNITY



PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY

INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

TO OUR IPS FAMILY:

Ours is a community of immense talents, immense accomplishments, and immense potential. We are the largest public school district in the State of Indiana, covering 80 square miles, employing more than 5,000 passionate and committed individuals, and educating and caring for over 30,000 remarkable students. We empower our students to think critically, creatively and responsibly, to embrace diversity and pursue their dreams with purpose.

At IPS, we believe all students can achieve their full potential, learn at high levels, and graduate prepared to succeed in school, career and life. We are committed to ensuring that every student in every neighborhood receives the education and opportunities they deserve. Much work, however, still needs to be done. And this is why this IPS Board of School Commissioners is committed to using this moment as a launchpad and to begin the work of Rebuilding Stronger.

Under the direction of this board and Superintendent Dr. Aleesia Johnson, IPS is a family of schools committed to the principles of academic excellence and racial equity. The success of each individual student may no longer be predicted by the color of their skin. We know there are schools in our boundaries that for far too long, by most objective measures, have underperformed and failed to prepare students for long-term success. Our scholars wake up every morning in the midst of a global pandemic and the largest civil rights movement of their generation. It is a time of uncertainty and introspection. IPS stands, in this moment, prepared to no longer simply do the best with what we have, but to actively and intentionally craft a school community that is truly great and gives every student a learning environment that challenges them, nurtures them and prepares them for the full weight of their dreams and potential.

The time for bold, dynamic and ambitious action is now. This board, through strategic, long-range planning, has engaged with its community over the past several months to learn about what families, community leaders, business leaders and students want and need from their schools. We have heard you. Student success is the guiding principle that will spur our decision-making. High quality schools may no longer be dictated by the neighborhood you live in or the ability to find fortune in an enrollment lottery. Equitable access to high-quality schools is the highest priority of this community and this board.

We know that in order to accomplish our goals and achieve the vision the community has set for our community, we must face head-on the challenges before us. Student growth and proficiency must show unprecedented improvement as measured by performance on the statewide assessment and as seen through our high school graduation rates. As a family of schools in which the majority of students identify as African-American and/or Latinx, the elimination of the achievement gap between these students and their peers is imperative. We must be a district in which every single family feels engaged, accepted, welcomed and supported by their school community. And we must rebuild trust, such that parents are compelled to enroll their children in our schools and grow our community of schools.

Under the direction of Dr. Johnson, much great work has already been undertaken. We are already seeing exceptional results and seek to build upon the progress we've made. (See Work in Progress Page 5.) We are proud of the competitive teacher pay we continue to offer and our ability to retain high quality educators. We continue to demonstrate our desire to collaborate with education partners through our Innovation Network Schools, which serve 12,672 students overall, and the sharing of the 2018 operating referendum funds with our charter partners who specifically serve 10,086 students. We seek unique, ambitious and innovative ways to reimagine and rebuild the IPS community.

But our families are not interested in a great start and the best intentions – they are interested in equity and excellence and they are interested in seeing sustainable turnaround of our low performing schools. The real work is ahead of us. To this end, the Board has established defined attributes or guiding principles which will guide the development of a Rebuilding Stronger Reorganization to address the areas of growth opportunity and achieve our community's vision for an equitable and excellent family of schools. (See Guiding Principles Page 3.) The manner in which we undertake this work will matter greatly. We have engaged with our community through Community Conversations to align our values and priorities and will continue to listen and respond to what our families and IPS stakeholders want and need from our district. (See Commitments to Our Community Page 4.) Please join us in this work. We welcome your invitations to your table to continue these essential conversations. (See Next Steps & Engagement Opportunities Page 6.)

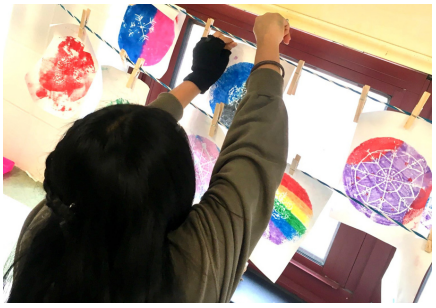
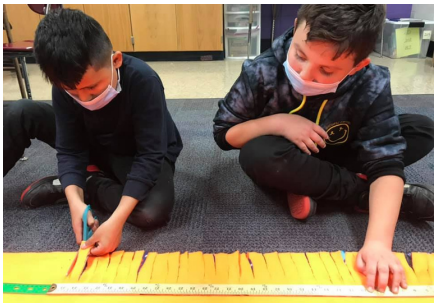
Together, we can and we must Rebuild Stronger. We will place **student outcomes** first. Lives of choice and purpose await our students if we put in the hard work to prepare them. We believe in **racial equity** in our IPS district. All students, without regard to their skin color, will find success and passion within their classroom walls. We commit to **continued improvement** across all systems. Anything less is a failure to our students and families. We will undertake this work of **Rebuilding Stronger** with **integrity**. The accountability established between our schools and families will foster trust and shared ownership. We will partner with our **community** to lead the district forward. The IPS district belongs to our families and students. We will now act to provide them the district they deserve.

In Service,

The IPS Board of School Commissioners

Evan Hawkins, President
Venita Moore, Vice President
Susan Collins, Secretary
Kenneth Allen
Diane Arnold
Will Pritchard
Taria Slack



GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The IPS Board of School Commissioners explored potential attributes and guiding principles of a long-range plan to ensure vision attainment. Stakeholders want a family of schools where all students have equitable access to high quality programs in close proximity with comprehensive student supports to meet unique student needs. To achieve this vision – we must allocate our resources more strategically – including people, programs and places. We must free up resources to invest in what matters most. In effort to do so – we will embark upon the further development of a comprehensive reorganization strategy informed by the following **Guiding Principles** established by the IPS Board of School Commissioners.

THE "REBUILDING STRONGER REORGANIZATION" SHOULD:

1. Ensure equitable geographic distribution of high performing & high demand programming.
2. Grow and replicate schools/programs with demonstrated academic success in supporting all students to both improve under-performing schools and explicitly close the opportunity gap for students of color.
3. Ensure students have access to high-quality and rigorous curriculum and instruction, and co-curricular, athletic and enrichment environments.
4. Address inequities that may exist in the school proximity boundary policy.
5. Create conditions that stabilize student populations at individual schools thereby decreasing student mobility.
6. Stabilize the IPS student population by ensuring successful grade level transitions as they move into Middle and High School.
7. Foster learning models and partnerships that establish welcoming school environments for non-English-speaking communities.
8. Ensure safe passage to school – whether by bus, vehicle or by foot – by leveraging the talent and resources of government, public-private partnerships, and nonprofits.
9. Consider the long-term financial stability of IPS and ensure that any significant school changes (replications, closures, consolidations, new construction) are planned and implemented in a way that acknowledges community and neighborhood dynamics.
10. Ensure facilities are high quality and inspiring for our students, and that unused facilities have a robust plan for reuse.





COMMITMENTS TO OUR COMMUNITY

Throughout Phase 1 engagement, many stakeholders shared not only what they hope for the future of IPS and its students, but also important suggestions related to how IPS engages, plans, takes action, and communicates. In response to these suggestions, the Board of School Commissioners has also established **Commitments to Our Community**. Aligned with IPS values, that will guide future engagement, planning and implementation.

As we work together to co-create our "**Rebuilding Stronger Reorganization**" strategy – we commit to the following values and behaviors:

STUDENTS FIRST

- IPS will respond with urgency, prioritizing our students' needs.

RACIAL EQUITY & CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

- IPS will ensure that schools are equitably resourced and adequately staffed to be successful.
- IPS will ensure equity and excellence guide all decision making.

INTEGRITY

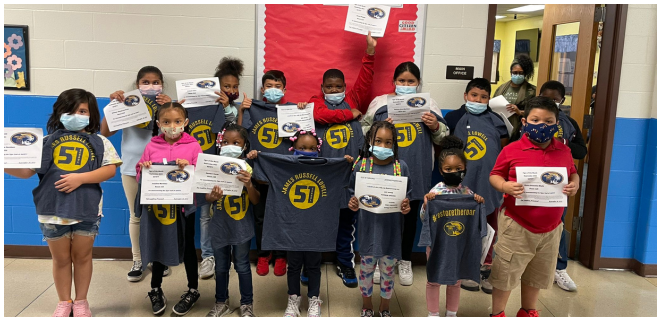
- IPS will clearly articulate its actions supported with data.
- IPS will be prudent and fiscally responsible.
- IPS will communicate school and program options more clearly to ensure families are empowered to make an informed decision for their student(s).

COMMUNITY

- IPS will intentionally and authentically seek out families and communities where they are.
- IPS will ensure our stakeholders are part of the creation and implementation of the plan.
- IPS will create conditions that support schools in more fully leveraging community assets and empower families as partners in their students' education.
- IPS will proactively consider the realities of merging student populations across significant cultural and community lines when advancing portfolio changes.

WORK IN PROGRESS





In June 2021, the IPS Board of School Commissioners formally adopted the 2025 Board Goals. The goals are specifically aligned to the district's Strategic Plan 2025 and reflect the priorities and values of the Board of School Commissioners. Many of the goals, while aspirational in nature, demonstrate our commitment to eliminating the achievement gap between students of color and their white peers, ensuring that every student within IPS boundaries has a high-quality school to call home in which they feel valued and welcomed. The Board of School Commissioners will receive updates on a continual basis throughout the year on progress toward goal completion (https://myips.org/district-school-board/2025-board-goals/).

The IPS Board of School Commissioners understand the need for **urgent action** to ensure our **students** can access the supports they need to **grow and thrive**. The IPS family of schools has many critical initiatives and strategies that are already planned and in early implementation that align with stakeholder feedback. Please visit our website to review the full Strategic Plan 2025 (https://myips.org/strategic-plan-2025/). Below you will see some highlights of our **Work in Progress**.

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY #1: ACCESS TO RIGOROUS CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Themes from Community Input

- Student-Centered Learning - every student has what they need when they need it to learn and grow
- Equitable Opportunities - every student has access to high quality, well-resourced choices
- Whole Child Approach - every student's full developmental needs are prioritized to advance education equity and ensure they reach their full potential

Related Initiative

- Invested in new ELA Curriculum in 2019 (curriculum is high quality and highly rated)
- Leveraging Federal Stimulus dollars to provide intentional professional development to our school leaders and teachers to support the implementation of the new ELA curriculum
- Will invest in new Math and Science curriculum in the SY 22-23
- Investing $1.1M to build out Future Centers at all high schools
- Launching additional extended learning opportunities outside of school time including enrichment programs, tutoring, summer programming, and athletic programs
- New Innovation Partnerships with Paramount School of Excellence and Phalen Leadership Academy's online schools, ensured that families have access to high-quality virtual options within the IPS Family.

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY #2: PROMOTE RACIAL EQUITY

Themes from Community Input

- Culture of Engagement & Excellence – every student benefit from diverse stakeholders who are informed, engaged, and aligned to create a culture of excellence and school pride

Related Initiative

- In 2019, IPS passed a Racial Equity Board Policy, which outlined our collective values and commitments to furthering our equity work
- Partnered with the Racial Equity Institute since 2016 to provide immersive two day equity trainings for all staff
- IPS has increased the diversity of our applicant pool and is focusing on the retention of teachers of color through multiple talent initiatives, including; launching an Indy Teach Residency, partnering with Purdue for a STEM Residency Program and implementing an Early College Career Pathway
- Launched an emerging schools cohort, which outlines a comprehensive strategy to provide additional supports to our lowest performing schools

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY #3: FOSTER AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT

Themes from Community Input

- Community Collaboration & Assets - every student and their family have access to meaningful wraparound supports and community assets

Related Initiative

- Establishing community partnerships to improve attendance
- Awarded USDOE Promise Neighborhood totaling almost $30 million over five years to support high quality, data-driven schools with integrated community-based services to support the needs of every child and family at targeted schools
- Leveraging Federal Stimulus dollars to launch City Connects and Community in Schools – two national best practice programs that support school wrap around supports
- Housing Stability for Student Success Initiative at Thomas Gregg Neighborhood School to decrease student mobility

STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITY #4: OPERATE AND FUND STRATEGICALLY

Themes from Community Input

- Equitable Opportunities - every student has access to high quality, well-resourced choices
- Effective & Cared for Staff - every student is being educated and supported by competent and cared for staff that have what they need to support each student's unique potential

Related Initiative

- Launched Rebuilding Stronger campaign to drive community engagement in a long-range reorganization plan
- Implemented cost reduction and revenue generation strategies in key departments, which is estimated to drive savings of ~$18M for the 21-22 school year
- Have continued to invest in teacher and staff compensation – resulting in our starting teacher pay being one of the highest in Marion County and fulfilling the purpose of the 2018 Referendum
- Proactively developed an innovative model to share 2018 Operating Referendum proceeds with our Innovation Charter Network; this model works to ensure students in the IPS family of schools have access to the supports they need

NEXT STEPS & ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

By providing ongoing opportunities for community input and voice throughout the process, IPS ensures that not only is the **District Rebuilding Stronger, but Rebuilding Stronger Together**. Below is a summary of the **4 Phases of Engagement**. We have completed Phase 1 and will begin Phase 2 in February 2022. Please continue to invite us to your table to ensure your voice informs our "Rebuilding Stronger Reorganization."

PHASES OF ENGAGEMENT

PHASE 1: Vision and Set Priorities: Let's dream about what we want and what is possible.

- We will engage our community to imagine the IPS we want in the future.

PHASE 2: Plan and Model: Let's explore how we make our vision attainable.

- We will engage with our community to share and understand the data that informs reorganization.
- We will engage with our community to understand potential reorganization strategies.
- We will engage with our community to evaluate reorganization strategies and their alignment with the established Guiding Principles.

PHASE 3: Refine and Finalize: Let's finalize the plan so we can get to work.

- We will engage with our community to share and understand the draft reorganization plan.
- We will engage with our community to evaluate the plan based on community input and Guiding Principles.
- We will engage with our community to refine and finalize the reorganization plan.

PHASE 4: Board Takes Action: Let's work together to make our dream and vision a reality.

- The IPS Board of School Commissioners takes formal action on a finalized plan.
- We will engage with our community to implement the reorganization.

STAY CONNECTED

Please visit the Rebuilding Stronger webpage accessible via the IPS website at **www.myips.org**.

Click on the Rebuilding Stronger logo at the top of the IPS homepage. Information will be updated regularly including upcoming engagement opportunities, planning timeline and overview, and completed engagement opportunities.



THANK YOU

To Our IPS Family – **We THANK YOU!!**

We thank you for your voice, your commitment to **EQUITY** and the greater good, and we thank you for your passion to ensure the IPS family of schools is **EXCELLENT** for each and every student we serve. The opportunity is great, the need is urgent and together we can make it happen.

APPENDIX: PHASE 1 STAKEHOLDER INPUT REPORT