



Student Handbook 2026-2027



Welcome to Simon Youth Graduation Academy at Indianapolis Public Schools!

Simon Youth Graduation Academy at Indianapolis Public Schools is a partnership between the Indianapolis School Corporation and the Simon Youth Foundation. Through this partnership, we will provide motivated 11th and 12th grade students along with students who are pregnant and parenting with the opportunity to participate in an accelerated high school program that combines face-to-face learning and online learning. Students will have the opportunity to work at their own pace, accelerating their academic careers. This will allow them to make up credits they may not have received in previous high school settings, or to obtain needed credits quickly, freeing up space on their schedules to allow them to explore our Digital Photography, Business & Accounting, and Hospitality pathways. We are here to work with you to design an academic program that meets your needs and prepares you for life beyond high school.

This handbook is designed to provide you with the basic information you need to be successful in our program. Inside you will find our mission and vision, core values and beliefs, staff contact information, and basic rules and operating procedures. Please review this with your parent or guardian.

Welcome to Simon Youth Graduation Academy at Indianapolis Public Schools!

We are so glad that you are here!

Robert E. Moses

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Principal, Simon Youth Graduation Academy @ Indianapolis Public Schools

Vision, Mission and Core Commitments and Beliefs

Vision: The Simon Youth Graduation Academy at Indianapolis Public Schools will meet students where they are and will take them where they need to go.

Mission: The Simon Youth Graduation Academy at IPS will be a catalyst to transforming the lives of students through a uniquely tailored flexible learning environment. Meaningful professional and educational opportunities will assist students in obtaining their IPS diplomas and empower them to be happy, productive and successful individuals.

IPS Core Commitments and Beliefs

- 1. All IPS students can achieve their full potential, learn at high levels, and graduate prepared to succeed in school, career and life.**
 - Preparation for success in college, career and life requires academic achievement, self and social awareness, life-long learning skills, and hard work.
 - Success includes positively contributing to our society and participating in civic life.
 - It is immoral to allow race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status to limit student achievement.
 - Providing many school choice options helps families find the school best matched to their child's talents, needs, interests, and unique learning styles.
- 2. Effective teachers and great schools are the key to students' success.**
 - The student-teacher relationship drives success.
 - Effective teachers have the power to make decisions in the best interest of their students, and they take responsibility for student learning.
 - Every school has an effective principal.
 - Quality schools set clear expectations and high standards for all students.

3. All IPS schools must be great places to teach and great places to learn.

- Effective teachers and principals are valued professionals.
- Teachers and principals' control and are accountable for what happens in their schools, and have the power to make decisions in the best interest of the students they serve.
- Students learn best in schools that are safe, clean, nurturing and respectful environments.
- Schools are diverse, vibrant and welcoming communities with strong academic, co-curricular, and extracurricular opportunities.

4. The IPS Central Administration exists solely to support the work of teachers and schools and must be a high-performing organization.

- All district functions are aligned to support and empower a system of autonomous schools that are held accountable to clear performance metrics.
- The district demonstrates diversity, innovation and best practice at all levels of the organization.
- District resources are allocated fairly and equitably among schools through the use of weighted student funding.
- The district maintains efficient instructional and business systems that operate in a transparent and ethical way.

5. IPS families and the entire Indianapolis community have a shared responsibility for student success and will benefit from this success.

- Families are our students' first teachers, and schools provide a range of ways for them to participate in the education of their children.
- We seek opportunities to connect schools, students, and families with services and other community/cultural assets.
- We seek involvement and investment by all stakeholders in the community to broaden our students' experiences and opportunities to engage in our city, state, and beyond.
- Every family in Indianapolis has access to a high quality school regardless of where they live.

Simon Youth Graduation Academy Staff

Simon Youth Graduation Academy @ IPS	Staff Member	Position	Phone/ Rm#	Email
Principal: Robert Moses (317) 693-5313 mosesre@myips.org Admin Asst: Eva Maldonado (317) 693-5441 maldonadoc@myips.org Room #79 Main Office (317) 693-5441 School Police: 4633 Front Gate: 5337 Tech HS: 5300/7501 Tech Nurse: 5342	Lon Amstutz	School Counselor	(317) 693-6289/Counseling Ofc	AmstutzLC@myips.org
	Mary Beardsley	English Teacher	(317) 693-6079/Classroom #88	BeardslM@myips.org
	Eric Broadus	Science Teacher	(317) 693-6027/Classroom #70b	broaduse@myips.org
	Margaret Gisler	Special Education-TOR	(317) 600-6555	gislemm@myips.org
	Ronald Hanson	Photography Teacher	(317) 693-6080/Classroom #80	HansonR@myips.org
	Robert Jackson	Discipline Administrator	(317) 693-5028/Classroom #71	jacksorl@myips.org
	Robert Lyon	Math Teacher	(317) 693-6026/Classroom #87	LyonR@myips.org
	Angela Mangum	ENL Teacher	(317) 693-6027/Classroom #72	manguma@myips.org
	Hannah Newlin	Art Teacher	(317) 693-6080/Classroom #80	andersonh@myips.org
	Benjamin Purcell	Social Studies Teacher	(317) 693-6020/Classroom #70	purcellb@myips.org
	Karina Rogers	Office Associate	(317) 693-6027/Classroom #72	rogersk@myips.org
	Erin Taylor	Special Education-TOR	(317) 693-6079/Classroom #88	taylorerin@myips.org
	Lee Ann Weilhammer	Social Worker	(317) 693-5028/Classroom #71	WeilhamL@myips.org

Hours of Operation

Our campus will open at 7:15 and close at 2:00 daily. Students are expected to arrive at 7:15 am and dismiss at 2:00 pm. You and the School Counselor will create special circumstance schedules where appropriate. Lunch and breakfast will be provided daily.

Student Conduct

Students will be provided with the IPS Code of Conduct. All rules for student conduct are outlined in that document and abide by our Academy Full Value Contract, which will be developed and revised yearly by our students.

COVID-19 Health & Safety Regulations

As a Simon Youth Academy student, you are required to observe and follow the health & safety regulations under the present day covid-19 guidelines:

[Circle Centre Mall\Health & Safety First-Simon Malls](#)

Transportation

Academy students will utilize public transportation and will be provided with monthly IndyGo bus passes. We will be happy to assist you in figuring out [your route](#). While utilizing IndyGo facilities, students are subject to the [rules and regulations of IndyGo](#).

Student Services

On site services include our School Counselor and Social Worker, who will work to assist students in coping with teen challenges.

Medications During School Hours

Before any prescribed medication or treatment may be administered to a student during school hours, we will require the actual prescription from the child's physician accompanied by the written authorization of the parent. This document shall be kept on file. The prescription must be in its original container, labeled with the student's name and the exact dosage. At no time is the school to administer a dosage other than that authorized by the physician's prescription. Over the counter medicine must also be accompanied by written authorization and submitted to the office.

Meal/Textbook Assistance

Parents who want to receive meal and textbook assistance for their children must submit an application. Students from households that meet federal income standards are eligible for free or reduced-price meals and free textbooks. Students from households receiving food stamps or TANF are eligible for free meals and free textbooks. To avoid unwanted charges, it is best to submit an application before school opens.

To receive textbook assistance, an application must be submitted even if the student attends a school in which universal free meals are provided. Application forms are mailed each August to all families whose children attended IPS schools the previous school year. Parents are asked to return a completed application in a postage-free envelope enclosed in the mailing. Applications are available in the schools for students new to IPS and for students who did not receive an application in the mail. After school begins, parents may return completed applications to the school. Only one application per household is necessary. For more information call **226-4951**. Parents will be notified in writing if the application for meal and/or textbook assistance is approved or denied. If children transfer to another IPS school during the school year, a new application is not necessary.

GRADING SCALE

1) GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

The Board recognizes its responsibility for providing a system of grading student achievement that can help the student, teachers, and parents determine properly how well the student is achieving the goals of the Corporation's program.

The IPS grading system is designed to recognize and reward academic work in selected courses where student work is judged, by Indiana Department of Education curricular standards, to be more rigorous than standard courses. The grading system assigns weights to more rigorous courses to determine students' grade point average (GPA) and class ranks. The GPA is established by totaling all earned points and dividing by the total number of credits attempted.

2) GRADING SCALE

Course letter grades shall be assigned according to the table below for students in grades 1-12*.

IPS Grading Scale

Grade	Percentage Value to Grade
A	90-100
B	80-89
C	70-79
D	60-69
F	50-59
F	50
	You must have a MINIMUM of a C average to apply to most colleges and/or universities. Eligibility to participate in athletics and other extra-curricular activities requires a C average.

IPS Attendance Policy

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

The Indiana Department of Education requires accurate and consistent reporting of student attendance by the Indianapolis Public Schools. The Indiana Department of Education has a 95% attendance standard. To meet that standard, students must have no more than nine days of absence during the school year. Excused absences are included in the nine-day maximum. This District-wide policy is aimed at reducing truancy.

Indiana's Compulsory School Attendance law requires students to attend school each year for the number of days that schools are in session. Regular school attendance is important if students are going to achieve at high levels.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following types of absences are generally recognized as excused, subject to requirements set forth in I.C. 20-33-2:

- A. Documented illness or emergency
- B. Health care and social services appointments
- C. Pages in Indiana General Assembly
- D. Death in the immediate family
- E. Religious instruction commitments
- F. Subpoena as a witness in a judicial proceeding
- G. Participation in Election Day activities
- H. Active Duty in the Indiana National Guard
- I. Detention in Juvenile or Criminal Justice System

If a student is absent because of illness or emergency, the parent must contact the school the morning of the day the student is absent, and/or provide a note on the day following the absence. In those cases where a student is absent for five (5) or more consecutive days as a result of illness or injury, a doctor's statement shall be required as a condition of classifying the absence as excused.

A pattern of excused absences may be an indication that the student's attendance is not in alignment with District policy and may be treated as unexcused. If there is doubt as to the legitimacy of the excuses, the principal makes a determination that the absences are unexcused after an

investigation. In such case, the student's parents shall be given notice of the principal's determination and afforded an opportunity to contest that determination.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

With the exception of absences resulting from suspension, all absences other than those listed above generally shall be classified as unexcused unless extenuating circumstances, as determined by the principal, warrant that the absence will be classified as excused.

The following procedures will be implemented to help ensure student attendance:

- A. Students who miss up to three (3) unexcused days within a school year will have their parents contacted by the classroom teacher. This contact should be documented by the teacher.
- B. The social worker will also contact the student's parent after the student has missed three (3) unexcused days. An additional parent contact will be made by the social worker after the student has missed a fourth unexcused day. The social worker will work with the child's parents to identify barriers to the child's attendance and possible strategies to remove these obstacles, and to develop a plan to improve the student's attendance.
- C. When a student has had five (5) unexcused absences in a school year, the student is identified as a Chronic Truant and the student's attendance records will be flagged (CT). The social worker will continue to work with the student to correct the attendance problem. The social worker will also send a certified letter to the student's parents notifying the parents of potential legal action.
- D. When a student has had ten (10) unexcused absences in a school year, the student is identified as a Habitual Truant and the student's attendance records will be flagged (HT). If a student is enrolled in a middle school or a high school and is

under the age of eighteen (18), the District will refer the student to truancy court for a violation of I.C. 20-33-2 (compulsory school attendance). Students who are determined to be in violation of I.C. 20-33-2 may be placed on probation by the court and will be monitored more closely by the social worker.

Students Leaving School Early

Parents/guardians may come into the office to sign-out their child. A written excuse should be turned in the following day. The absence will be excused according to IPS policy.

Dress Code Policy

Students are expected to dress in a “business casual” manner appropriate for a school setting. Simon Youth Academy Scholars dress for success.

No student shall be considered non-compliant with the uniform dress policy in the following instances:

- 1.** When a student wears a button, armband or other accessory to exercise the right to freedom of expression as provided by law, unless the button, armband or other accessory signifies or is related to: gangs, gang membership or gang activity; hate groups; lewd or profane expressions, symbols or signs; drugs and/or drug use; drinking or alcohol; derogatory statements or expressions; etc. The principal or his/her designee will make the official determination of the appropriateness of the button or other expression of speech.
- 2.** When a student wears the uniform of a nationally recognized youth organization, such as the Boy Scouts or the Girl Scouts, on regular meeting days.
- 3.** When a student wears the uniform of JROTC or other school military programs on the required uniform days.

4. When a student's parent or guardian has secured a waiver from the uniform policy by following the procedures for obtaining a waiver.
5. When a student is on campus outside of the normal school hours

Restricted Attire

The following articles of clothing or styles of dress are strictly forbidden while in IPS schools, or while attending athletic events or other school-sponsored activities during school hours:

- X No hats worn in building during the school day
- X No over-sized pants or shirts
- X No pants worn below the waist or "sagging"
- X No overalls or coveralls
- X No sweatpants/sweat suits, jogging pants/suits, warm-up pants/suits, athletic pants/shorts
- X No knit, nylon, spandex, biking or gym shorts or pants
- X No spandex, nylon or knit tightly fitted clothes
- X No skintight dresses or tops
- X No tank tops, tube tops, halter tops, mesh tops, midriff tops, spaghetti strap tops
- X No sleeveless tops
- X No shirts made of shiny materials
- X No sunglasses
- X No pajama tops or bottoms
- X No thongs/slippers/sandals/bare feet/exposed toes
- X No "heelies" or "wheelies" (i.e. athletic shoes with skates)
- X No clothing or other item with offensive, lewd, vulgar, obscene or hate language, slogans or pictures
- X No buttons, jewelry or other accessories containing lewd, vulgar, obscene, hate or offensive messages or pictures or which advocate or advertise the use of drugs or alcohol
- X No secret society, fraternity or sorority symbols or lettering
- X No hair rollers, combs, picks, or cosmetology clamps
- X No scarves, head rags, doo rags, bandanas, sweatbands, hats, caps or other head coverings (Note: Approval for certain religious customs are permitted by approval of the school administration, i.e. Muslim female head coverings, Jewish male head covering)

- X** No visible underpants, thongs, bras, camisoles or other clothing items considered by the principal to be undergarments.
- X** No clothing altered by cuts, slits or holes or that in any way exposes the skin
- X** No detachable gold teeth or fangs (unless required by a dentist with written documentation on file)
- X** No grills!

Anything else the principal or designee deems inappropriate or disruptive to the educational environment will be prohibited.

IPS Bullying Policy

Bullying is prohibited in the Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS) as referenced in Indiana Code 20-33-8-0.2 and IPS Board Resolution No. 5517.01.

Bullying is defined as overt, unwanted, repeated acts or gestures, including verbal or written communications or images transmitted in any manner (including digitally or electronically), physical acts committed, aggression, or any other behaviors that are committed by a student or group of students against another student with the intent to harass, ridicule, humiliate, intimidate, or harm the targeted student and create for the targeted student an objectively hostile school environment.

Students may not engage in bullying on school grounds, or while traveling to or from a school or a school activity, function, or event. Further, bullying is prohibited off school grounds while using property or equipment provided by the school, or while attending a school activity, function, or event.

Principals are responsible for informing students, parents, teachers, and staff that bullying will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including, suspension and expulsion. Further, principals are encouraged to engage students, staff, and parents in meaningful

discussions about the negative aspects of bullying. The parent involvement may be through parent organizations already in place in each school.

Parents or students who suspect that bullying is taking place should report the matter to the principal. Upon receiving the report, the principal will investigate the matter at the building level and consequences will be assessed, as appropriate, consistent with the Board's policy entitled "Student Discipline".

Title IX Policy Forbidding Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment of Students

Policy against sex discrimination

In accordance with applicable law, including Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the Indiana Civil Rights Law, it is the policy of Indianapolis Public Schools that no student will be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination in any education program or activity on the basis of sex. A student may not, on the basis of sex, be limited in the enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity, including courses, extracurricular activities, benefits, and facilities.

Prohibition against sexual harassment

The policy against sex discrimination includes a prohibition against sexual harassment. Sexual harassment consists of sexual advances, sexual gestures, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that is unwelcome and that limits or denies, on the basis of sex, a student's ability to participate in or benefit from the education program.

This policy prohibits sexual harassment by an employee or agent of IPS, by another student, and by third parties who come in contact with students at school or at school-related activities. This policy also prohibits any employee from being in a locked room with a student.

Title IX Coordinator

IPS' Title IX Coordinator, who is responsible for IPS' compliance with Title

IX and directs the investigation of complaints, is Ginger Arvin, 120 E. Walnut St., Room 602B. Indianapolis, IN 46204, (317) 226-3870, arving@ips.k12.in.us.

Making a Complaint

Parents and students are encouraged promptly to submit a complaint or provide information about suspected sex discrimination or harassment so that IPS can take appropriate action to resolve the situation. A parent or student should make the complaint orally or in writing to the building administrator, school counselor, school social worker, or directly to the Title IX Coordinator. A complaint should be made as soon as possible after the complained-of incident, preferably within ten days after the parent has been notified by a student of sex discrimination or harassment. However, IPS accepts complaints after the ten-day filing period.

Investigation and Corrective Action

The Title IX Coordinator will promptly investigate, or direct the investigation of, complaints and reports of sex discrimination or harassment. The investigation will be completed in a timely manner. Depending on the nature and complexity of the issues, it should generally take no more than 30 days.

After the investigation, the Title IX Coordinator will report the result to the Superintendent, including, where appropriate, making a recommendation for reasonable, timely, age-appropriate, and effective corrective action. The Superintendent may impose discipline up to and including a recommendation for employee termination or student expulsion. The Title IX Coordinator will advise the Complainant and the person accused of misconduct, in writing, whether or not the allegations were found to be substantiated.

The decision of the Superintendent is final unless an employee or student has a statutory right to challenge the Superintendent's recommendation for expulsion or termination or an employee has a collectively bargained right to challenge the imposition of discipline.

Guidelines

The Superintendent's administrative guidelines are available at Board Docs at <http://www.board.ips.k12.in.us/index.php?id=4233>.

APPENDIX

Successful Simon Youth Academy Students...

1. Arrive to school within 15 minutes of their starting time and work hard every day.
2. Put their cell phones away.
3. Have and use a good support system. What is yours?
4. Ask for help.
5. Prioritize school over work.
6. Are willing to work from home if needed. (Isn't needed all the time)
7. Are willing to receive feedback.
8. Are willing to listen to and respect the authority of the teachers.
9. Are resilient.
10. Have a positive attitude.

Do you have what it takes?

Student Compact

Simon Youth Academy at Circle Center is committed to the success of ALL scholars. In order to provide the best educational program possible for our scholars, the Academy agrees to provide the following:

- Graduation planning
- Post-secondary education counseling
- Accelerated online curriculum
- Opportunities for career exploration including:
 - Internship opportunities
 - Commercial photography program
 - IPS Career and Technology pathways
- Small classes
- Personal attention
- Safe and secure learning environment
- Social service resources

In order to insure their personal success, scholars agree to the following:

- Come to school ON TIME EVERY DAY
- SECURE CELL PHONES IN LOCKERS DURING CLASS TIME
- Follow the instructions and directives of the faculty
- Take responsibility for academic achievement
- Respect themselves, others and our learning environment
- Abide by the IPS Code of Conduct and the Simon Youth Academy Handbook
- Dress respectfully
- Honor the student-created Full Value Contract
- Abide by the Code of Conduct for Circle Centre Mall and IndyGo
- Meet weekly with your graduation mentor
- Participate in Advisory Activities
- Participate in Service Projects

Failure to honor your commitment to this compact will result in your removal from the program.

Academy Representative _____ Date _____

Scholar _____ Date _____

Simon Youth Academy at Circle Centre Full Academic Value Contract

As the students of Simon Youth Academy, we recognize that it is necessary to agree on how we will work to achieve our common goal of having 100% of us graduate from high school. In order to reach this goal, we have identified the following behaviors:

To make sure that everyone maximizes and properly values their time, we will:

- Respect and organize your time
- Attend ALL Class sessions during the day – ON TIME
- Lift each other up when we are down or having a struggle in class
- Be respectful of others and their time

We will avoid:

- Offering constant excuses
- Exhibiting Bad attitudes
- Exhibiting Critical attitudes
- Passing blame & discussing it with other teachers as a reason to not being able to finish work in other classes
- Placing more emphasis on one class vs. another – ALL classes are important! You can't graduate until you complete them ALL!

To make sure we maintain a productive academic environment, we will:

- Strive to complete classes in 23 days or 40 hours or as closely as we can
- Stay consistent by attending EVERY class and completing work
- Treat earning a diploma as if it were our own now because it is! It'll have your name on it and no one else's!
- Take care of our business by taking responsibility for our academic actions

We will avoid:

- Not doing what we are supposed to do, when we are supposed to do it
- Being left behind by not graduating on time in May

Student: _____

Academy Representative: _____