



# INDIANA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

TO: Deer Ridge Elementary School  
FROM: Timothy Schultz, Hearing Officer, Indiana State Board of Education  
RE: Appeal by Deer Ridge Elementary School of its 2015-16 Letter Grade  
DATE: March 8, 2017

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**Finding:** Deer Ridge Elementary School's appeal of its 2015-16 category placement of a "B" grade should be denied.

## I. Facts

Deer Ridge Elementary School ("Deer Ridge"), part of the MSD Southwest Allen County School Corporation, received a letter grade of "B" for the 2015-16 school year. Deer Ridge appealed the "B" grade due to concerns regarding the 2015-16 ISTEP assessment.

## II. Argument and Analysis

Deer Ridge contends that the 2015-16 ISTEP results of many of its students were invalid due to multiple technology issues the school experienced during the administration of the online assessment. Deer Ridge asserts that "those disruptions removed any standardization of the testing environment."<sup>1</sup> In other words, Deer Ridge is asserting that the technology issues experienced by its students were the direct cause of the school's lower ISTEP scores for the 2015-16 school year.

However, it is not possible to ascertain if the school's technology issues caused the lower ISTEP scores or if the lower scores were caused by other factors. For example, the school's argument does not account for the ISTEP's more rigorous standards incorporated during the last two years. The 2015-16 ISTEP test was the second year of a new state assessment for grades 3-8 based on Indiana's more rigorous college and career ready standards. As a result of the transition to new standards and assessment, a new baseline was established for ISTEP beginning in 2015.

In light of the more rigorous college and career ready standards recently incorporated into ISTEP, which coincided with the school's technology issues, it is impossible to determine the cause of the school's lower scores.

For the foregoing reasons, I find that Deer Ridge's appeal for the 2015-16 school year should be denied and its 2015-16 category placement of a "B" should not be replaced with a null grade.

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<sup>1</sup> See A-F appeal, submitted by Deer Ridge, on 1/13/17.