



INDIANA COMMISSION *for*
HIGHER EDUCATION



INDIANA PARTNERSHIP PENTAGON

MEETING TWO | PROGRAM BOOK

OBJECTIVE

Participation in the Indiana Commission for Higher Education (the Commission) Partnership Pentagon will allow the Commission to develop and expand critically important collaboration with thought leaders from five key sectors of society, including business, government, education (K-12 and higher education), non-profits (community- and faith-based organizations) and philanthropy. A group of leaders throughout Indiana, the Partners, will be working in concert with the Commission over 18 months to better understand and propose solutions around Indiana's challenges and opportunities related to higher education. The intent of this work will be to maximize the collective impact of the five sectors amongst one another as multiplicative, rather than simply additive. The Hunt Institute will work alongside the Partners and Commission staff to provide support in the form of facilitation, research and design thinking to fully develop ideas for policies and programs and deepen partnerships.

The Commission is currently setting long-term goals to address higher education trends, such as reversing the declining college-going rates for youth and adults, continuing to improve student persistence and completion, and increasing graduate retention in Indiana. These strategic areas are part and parcel of improving, and reevaluating overall college attainment rates for Indiana. The Ultimate goal is to create a culture where Hoosiers, individually and together:

- Place great value on education, specifically opportunities beyond a high school diploma.
- Recognize and embrace the fact that this is a fundamental for individuals to be locally and globally competitive.
- Reverse declines in and robustly improve in measurable areas such as college going-rates, completions, and graduate retention.
- Individually commit to continuously increasing their own degree of preparedness in the workforce and more broadly civil society.
- Challenge the belief – some may even say culture – that casts doubt on the value of education and training beyond high school as a pathway to prosperity and lift up the virtues of education, predicated on facts that offer clear evidence of return on investment and economic and social mobility.

Since the state began tracking postsecondary attainment in 2009, over two-thirds of Indiana's growth has come from sub-associate degree credentials (technical certificates, certificates and industry certifications) while growth stagnated for associate degrees and higher. When examining attainment with bachelor's degrees and above, Indiana lost ground in national rankings moving from 39th to 43rd.

The guiding principles of the Partnership Pentagon will be to increase opportunities to access economic and social mobility and prosperity for all Hoosiers. For employers, these principles yield a robust and future-oriented talent pipeline and more stable and thriving communities throughout Indiana. While the Commission team has begun to pursue a historic agenda during the current legislative session at the Statehouse to reverse noted trends and catalyze opportunities, Commissioner Lowery believes that deep and long-term improvements will require collaborative and concerted work by the five key sectors of society for truly transformational change. Thus, the creation of the Partnership Pentagon.

By the end of the 18-month period, which will include six meetings of the Partners, the expectation is to have a comprehensive set of policy and budget recommendations that can be taken to the full Commission, the Governor and the Indiana General Assembly for action in the 2025 biennial budget session.



AGENDA **MONDAY JUNE 26, 2023**

Indiana State Library, 315 W. Ohio Street, Indianapolis, IN

9:00 AM – 9:40 AM

WELCOME REMARKS AND MEETING 1 RECAP

- 👤 **Dr. Madeline Smith**, Director of Higher Education, The Hunt Institute
- 👤 **Chris Lowery**, Commissioner, Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education

HISTORY
REFERENCE 211

9:40 AM – 9:55 AM

BREAK

9:55 AM – 10:15 AM

THE ROLE OF K-12 IN HIGHER EDUCATION ACCESS AND COMPLETION

Indiana prioritized postsecondary attainment as a strategy for cultivating a robust economy by setting a postsecondary attainment goal of 60 percent of all working age adults by 2025. In 2021, the education level of Indiana's population ages 25 to 64 varied greatly, with 10.1 percent holding a graduate or professional degree, 20.6 percent a bachelor's degree, 9.9 percent an associate degree, 13.3 percent with a workforce certificate or certification, 6.2 percent with some college, no degree/credential, 30.9 percent whose highest education is a high school graduation, and 8.9 percent without a high school diploma. In the US, there is a large disconnect between postsecondary institutions and K12 systems, leading to many students not being prepared for college or having the skills for a career. K12 systems need to expand access to early postsecondary opportunities in high school, increase student support, enhance teacher development, and prioritize accountability and evaluation.

- 👤 **Dr. Charity Flores**, Chief Academic Officer, Indiana Department of Education

10:15 AM - 10:45AM

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY EXPOSURE TO POSTSECONDARY AND CAREER PATHWAYS

Studies show that connecting students to career pathways prior to high school graduation is integral in ensuring those students to go on to find success in the workforce – especially first-generation students and students from marginalized communities. Conversations will focus on how state leaders can foster connections between institutions of higher education (IHEs), school districts, and regional business leaders – with a focus on in-demand growth industries – to develop and expand opportunities for early exposure to career-relevant pathways.

MODERATOR

- 👤 **Michelle Ashcraft**, Associate Commissioner for K-12 Strategy, Indiana Commission for Higher Education

RESOURCE
EXPERTS

- 👤 **Flora Jones**, Director of Student Pathways, Indiana Department of Education
- 👤 **Dr. Todd Hurst**, Executive Director, Institute for Workforce Excellence, Indiana Chamber



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10:45AM - 11:45AM

BREAKOUT AND REFLECTION SESSION

Members will break into small groups to discuss what policies Indiana can implement to allow for early exposure to postsecondary and career pathways. At the end of the breakout session, each group should be prepared to identify two to three policy priorities and actionable items. One member of each group will report their discussion, including the two to three policy priorities. The group conversation will review the common features of policy priorities and action items identified in the small groups and will give committee members an opportunity to provide additional feedback and context on their recommendations.

MODERATOR

Julia Ahrns Hoffman, Senior Policy Analyst, The Hunt Institute

11:45 AM - 12:15PM

LUNCH

12:15 PM - 12:45PM

REMOVING SILOES ACROSS THE EDUCATION CONTINUUM

This session will dive deeper into creating partnerships between Education Preparation Programs (EPPs), K12 leaders and systems, and institutions of higher education (IHEs). There needs to be a mutual relationship between these stakeholders for more collaboration to occur. K12 schools can benefit from technology resources, professional development opportunities, access to student teachers, and a teacher pipeline. IHEs can benefit by offering their students real world experiences, creating better recruiting techniques, and connecting with students on a more personal level. These partnerships will help eliminate siloes in the education sector that have been around for a long period of time.

MODERATOR

Erica Vevurka, Director for K12, The Hunt Institute

**RESOURCE
EXPERTS**

Dr. Pam Whitten, President, Indiana University

Raven DeRamus-Byers, Program Associate, PreK-12, Education Policy & Coordinator, National GYO Network, New America

12:45 PM - 1:45PM

BREAKOUT SESSION

Members will break into small groups to discuss ideas on how IHEs in Indiana and K12 systems can partner together to break those siloes. At the end of the breakout session, each group should be prepared to identify two to three policy priorities and actionable items. One member of each group will report their discussion, including the two to three policy priorities. The group conversation will review the common features of policy priorities and action items identified in the small groups and will give committee members an opportunity to provide additional feedback and context on their recommendations.

MODERATOR

Julia Ahrns Hoffman, Senior Policy Analyst, The Hunt Institute

1:45 PM - 2:00 PM

CLOSING REMARKS

Chris Lowery, Commissioner, Indiana Commissioner for Higher Education





RESOURCE EXPERTS



Dr. Michelle Ashcraft

Associate Commissioner for K-12 Strategy

Dr. Michelle Ashcraft leads the K-12 outreach team in efforts to increase Indiana’s college-going rate. In her role, Michelle oversees and collaborates on strategy to increase middle school students’ enrollment in the 21st Century Scholars program, high school Scholars’ completion of eligibility criteria to achieve 21st Century Scholars awards in higher education, high school students’ completion of the Indiana College Core and other early college credit, and FAFSA filing. Prior to joining the Commission, Michelle served as the director of Purdue Promise at Purdue University and previously worked for the University of Kentucky in New Student & Parent Programs.

Ashcraft earned her Ph.D. in higher education from Purdue University. She earned and a bachelor’s degree from Purdue University and master’s degree from the University of South Carolina.



Raven DeRamus-Byers

Program Associate, PreK-12, Education Policy & Coordinator, National GYO Network, New America

Raven DeRamus-Byers is the coordinator of the Grow Your Own Educators National Network at New America Washington, D.C. Prior to New America, DeRamus-Byers worked as a research assistant and educational consultant, but her years as a high school English teacher inspired her to dedicate her career to strengthening and diversifying the educator workforce. DeRamus-Byers holds a master’s degree in politics and education from Teachers College, Columbia University and a bachelor’s degree in English with concentrations in teacher preparation and African-American studies from Princeton University.



Dr. Charity Flores

Chief Academic Officer, Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Charity Flores currently serves as Chief Academic Officer (CAO) for the Indiana Department of Education and as an Executive Committee Member for the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium. As CAO she manages several teams including assessment, teaching and learning, special education and English learners.





Dr. Todd Hurst

Executive Director, Institute for Workforce Excellence, Indiana Chamber

Todd Hurst serves as the Executive Director of the Institute for Workforce Excellence, leading the organization's team focused on talent attraction, development, and retention strategies for the state of Indiana. Todd has been heavily involved with workforce and education in Indiana for many years, serving as the Vice President of Education and Workforce for Regional Opportunity Initiatives as well as the Director of Education and Workforce Innovation with CELL at the University of Indianapolis. Todd holds a Ph.D. in educational studies from the University of Kentucky, as well as a Master of Arts in curriculum and instruction from the University of Indianapolis and an undergraduate degree from Ball State University.



Flora Jones

Director of Student Pathways, Indiana Department of Education

Ms. Jones is a Proud School Administrator and Professional School Counselor with over twenty years of experience in the field of education. She prides herself in being a servant leader who has devoted her life to helping students find their passion and purpose and develop a plan for their future.

Before joining the IDOE, she served as the Director of Post-Secondary Readiness for Indianapolis Public Schools where she oversaw college, career, and life readiness initiatives across the district. Prior to her time in IPS, she spent over twenty years in MSD of Wayne Township in various roles including School Counselor, District Equity Team Leader, Recruitment Chairperson, Home School Advisor, At Risk Counselor, and GCL New Teacher Trainer, along with many other roles and responsibilities.

In her role as IDOE Director of Student Pathways, she is responsible for setting the direction of Pathway Opportunities for students as it relates to Graduation Pathways and Locally Created Pathways, Regional Work-Based Learning Opportunities and Support, Dual Credit Credentialing for School Staff to Increase Student Access to College Coursework, Postsecondary Credentialing for Students and Moving the Terminal End Point of High School Beyond the Graduation Stage. She is also responsible for the support and guidance in the area of High Abilities, Alternative Educational Programming, Homeless Children and Youth, and Homeschool Initiatives.





Erica Vevurka

Director of K-12, The Hunt Institute

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Erica Vevurka joined The Hunt Institute as the Director of K-12 in September 2021. Prior to arriving at The Institute, Erica spent a decade working at Communities In Schools, the nation's largest dropout prevention organization, as principal of stakeholder engagement, where she supported the president & CEO in carrying out the organization's strategic priorities, as well as led board engagement and alumni strategy.

Erica also has worked for the District of Columbia Public Schools Office of Special Education, Communities In Schools of North Carolina, and in the press offices for former North Carolina Governors Mike Easley and Bev Perdue. Erica received her master's degree in nonprofit management from The George Washington University, and her bachelor's degree in Spanish and journalism & communication from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



Dr. Pam Whitten

President, Indiana University

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Pamela Whitten is the 19th president of Indiana University and the first woman to lead the university. Under her leadership, IU has emphasized three core missions: providing broad access to education for all students from Indiana and beyond; pursuing world-class research, scholarship, and creative activity; and making meaningful contributions to improving Hoosier health and the economic, social, civic, and cultural development of the state and the world. She has placed a strong emphasis on prioritizing students across the state, appointing the university's first vice president for student success, and renewing IU's focus on student mental health. Before joining IU, Whitten held a variety of leadership roles, including at Michigan State University, the University of Georgia, and Kennesaw State University.



ABOUT THE PARTNERS

THE HUNT INSTITUTE | <https://hunt-institute.org/about/>

Established in 2001, The Hunt Institute honors the legacy of James B. Hunt, Jr., the former governor of North Carolina who distinguished himself as an ardent champion of education. The Hunt Institute brings together people and resources to inspire and inform elected officials and policymakers about key issues in education, resulting in visionary leaders who are prepared to take strategic action for greater educational outcomes and student success. Our mission is to provide unbiased research, technical expertise, and learning opportunities that equip and empower educators and policymakers to drive equitable reforms and become audacious champions for education.

INDIANA COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION | <https://www.in.gov/che/>

Created in 1971 by an act of the General Assembly and signed into law by then Governor Edgar Whitcomb, the Indiana Commission for Higher Education is now in its fifth decade of service to the State of Indiana. The Commission is a fourteen-member public body created to:

- Define the educational missions of public colleges and universities;
- Plan and to coordinate Indiana's state-supported system of post-high school education, taking into account the plans and interests of independent colleges and universities;
- Review both operating budget and capital budget appropriation requests from public institutions; Approve or disapprove for public institutions the establishment of any new branches, campuses, extension centers, colleges or schools;
- Approve or disapprove for public institutions the offering of any additional associate, baccalaureate or graduate degree or certificate program of two semesters or more in duration;
- Review all programs of public institutions and make recommendations to the governing board of the institution, the Governor, and the General Assembly concerning the funding and the disposition of these programs; and,
- Distribute student financial aid from state aid programs.

The Commission is not a governing board, but a coordinating agency that works closely with Indiana's public and independent colleges. In addition, The Commission has strong working relationships with many other State agencies, including: Department of Education, the Department of Workforce Development and the Independent Colleges of Indiana.



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The Hunt Institute brings together people and resources to inspire and inform elected officials and policymakers about key issues in education, resulting in visionary leaders who are prepared to take strategic action for greater educational outcomes and student success.

In 2016, The Hunt Institute became an independent, nonprofit entity and joined forces with Duke University's Sanford School of Public Policy to pursue research, educational partnerships, and events related to improving education policy.

Learn more at www.hunt-institute.org.



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