

# Superintendent News

WARRICK COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION  
ADMINISTRATION CENTER

This Edition:

2014-2015  
ISTEP+ Testing

## Big Changes in ISTEP+

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In less than 3 weeks, Indiana students will begin taking the new ISTEP+. Technologically enhanced responses will be required, as well as more rigorous and greater depth of knowledge questions. The testing schedule is more than twice as long as last year. Teachers, educators, and administrators have been raising questions about this year's test since September. With testing just weeks away, Governor Pence declared an executive order to shorten the test. While that is welcome news, it is highly unlikely any adjustments to the test can be made at this time. Should not the length of the new test have been discussed before schools started receiving testing material? How valid and reliable can this test, and the results, actually be? Let's step back and review how we ended up here. You may recall 2014-2015 was suppose to be the last year of the old ISTEP+ test and the new assessment was to be piloted. But then Indiana opted out of the Common Core and adopted the College and Career Readiness Standards, which are almost identical to Common Core. The federal DOE then informed Indiana their NCLB waiver would be denied, unless we implemented the new assessment this year. That started the panic to create a test, or assessment, to measure the new standards and now, just weeks away from testing, we are trying to shorten the test.

This entire debacle is yet another shining example of what happens when politics trumps education. It speaks directly to the disarray and lack of leadership state officials in this state have on K-12 education. Big money continues to pour into our state, promoting and shoving vouchers and charter schools down our throats, even though the vast majority of Hoosiers support their local public schools, and rate them very high year after year. It speaks to the fact that our local school boards and public schools continue to lose local control, as Indianapolis and our legislators pass more and more "one size fits all" legislation that hampers local teachers from doing their job. It is a national embarrassment and a shame. Our children deserve better.

But with all that said, I know ISTEP+ will go well in Warrick County, just as it always has in the past. I am confident our students will rise up to the challenge and give their best effort. I know how hard our teachers have worked to prepare our kids. I know they have mapped curriculum, provided diverse instruction, and prepared students to answer questions on the new test to the very best of their ability. We also know, even with the high stakes testing that is ISTEP+, in the end it is just a test. Nothing more. It has never, and never will, tell the whole story of a child's education. Warrick County School Corporation teachers and administrators know that. So as you prepare your child to take the new test, remember, all we can do is give our best effort. The results will be what they are, and we will move forward, continuing our work to prepare our students to be successful. I believe in the Warrick County School Corporation, I believe in our teachers, and I believe in our kids. I only wish I could say the same for our politicians and the so-called educational leaders in our state.

Brad Schneider, Superintendent