



Creating a System of High-Quality Education Options to Serve At-Risk Students

Indianapolis, Indiana

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About the Schools

Indianapolis Metropolitan High School

Founded in 2004 and operated by Goodwill Education Initiatives Inc., the [Indianapolis Metropolitan High School](#) (Indy Met) is a free public school for students in grades 9-12. The Indy Met is focused on serving students who face significant barriers such as involvement in the foster care or juvenile justice systems, special education, homelessness, teen pregnancy, and other at-risk factors. The Indy Met offers small class sizes allowing for individualized attention in all core classes, and students are able to earn the Core 40 Diploma, Core 40 Academic Honors Diploma, or Core 40 Technical Honors Diploma. Placing emphasis on ensuring students are prepared for college and career post-graduation, the Indy Met assists students in reaching their post-graduation goals by providing several academic services.

Academic coaches help students create individualized graduation plans to meet their postsecondary goals and also assist with job applications, college applications, financial aid, scholarships, and building a resume. The Indy Met also offers the Jobs for America's Graduates program, which gives juniors and seniors opportunities to explore college and careers through guest speakers, community service, and student leadership opportunities. By partnering with a number of community organizations, the Indy Met also offers free college and career electives. Dual credit classes are offered through Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis and help prepare students for the rigor of college classes and give them a head start on obtaining college credits. The Indy Met offers a variety of certifications in the areas of healthcare, information technology, business, logistics, and advanced manufacturing. Students are invited to enroll in Goodwill's job placement service TalentSource, which helps to place students in a full-time job after high school and offer's career coaching and assistance during a graduate's first year on the job.

Upon enrollment at Indy Met, students take the Reading Inventory to identify their reading level. Students who qualify receive extra support through the Read 180 program, which supplements their Language Arts course. Indy Met also offers 10 additional days of English and Math instruction in preparation for the End of Course Assessments or postsecondary assessments like the ACT or SAT.

Students who qualify for special education services are integrated into general curriculum classes and supported in meeting the same curriculum and expectations as their peers.

Goodwill Excel Center

The [Goodwill Excel Center](#) (Excel Center) is a free public high school that gives older youth and adults the opportunity to earn an Indiana Core 40 high school diploma. Operated by Goodwill Education

Initiatives Inc., the Excel Center opened in 2010 and has since expanded to 12 locations in Indiana, five of which are in Indianapolis.

The Excel Center aims to help students earn a diploma and prepare for postsecondary education and work and improve their career potential by building higher skills and specializations necessary to succeed in a 21st century workplace. The Excel Center model features an accelerated curriculum in the core areas of language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, allowing students to earn credits at a faster pace. At no extra cost, students can enroll in dual credit or postsecondary courses to begin their pathway to college or career. Students can also receive industry-recognized certifications such as Patient Access, Logistics Readiness, Project Management Essentials, Fundamentals for Materials Handling and Warehousing, Pharmacy Technician, Electrical System Technician, and Information Technology CompTIA. Schedules consist of both day and night classes Monday through Thursday with Fridays available for extra tutoring or support. Five eight-week terms are offered throughout the year.

The Excel Center offers multiple services to remove barriers for students such as free transportation and childcare while students are in class. Students also receive individual support in classes, flexible scheduling, and college and career planning. The College and Career Readiness Centers provide many educational and employment opportunities for students including leadership development, career exploration and counseling, soft-skills and pre-employment training, college admissions guidance, college level coursework, financial aid and scholarship assistance, and vocational training placement. Life Coaches are also assigned to each student to address issues and barriers to student success and keep students motivated to graduate.

Special education services are offered at the Excel Center. Services for qualifying students include special education coordinators in every school, dual licensed teachers who are both content experts and trained in special education, and integration into general curriculum classes so students are supported in meeting the same standards as their peers.

Options Charter Schools

[Options Charter Schools](#) (Options) is free public charter school with two campuses located in the Northern suburbs of Indianapolis. The Carmel campus (grades 9-12) opened in 2002 and was one of the first charter schools in Indiana, and Noblesville campus (grades 7-12) opened in 2006. Options now serves over 500 students throughout the state of Indiana.

Options has built a system to reflect and support students that have not found success in the traditional large public school environment and strives to meet students' social, emotional, and personal needs as well as academic goals. Students at Options create an Individualized Service Plan that assist them with accomplishing behavioral, emotional, and social goals with their advisors. Instruction goes beyond the classroom with project-based learning, laboratory assignments, technology portfolios, and practical demonstrations. Options offers flexible learning options and scheduling, small class sizes, and in some cases virtual learning through an online platform.

Options offers the Core 40 diploma and this approach consists of three components. The first component is the Foundations for Learning requires students to complete 25 credits in the core academic subjects of English, math, science, social studies, physical education, health, and electives. Students that have encountered academic challenges at their prior school setting, or while enrolled

about Options, have access to a robust credit recovery. The second component is Practical Applications where the curriculum focus is real life application. Students begin to explore careers and colleges and take part in community service and primary research on a student's interests for the future. Project activities include college visits, financial aid preparation and support and college and community research. Students also have the option to take part in Career Field Experiences where they can observe a career or take part in a work base learning experience. The final component is the Senior Institute which acts as a capstone for a student's academic experience. Student create and manage their own project which reflects their interests and passions. Their project must benefit their community while also giving them a chance to learn something new.

Options prides itself on the inclusive environment it has built for its students. Students are given a sense of control over their learning environment as they are regularly involved in the development of school rules, policies, events, and small group meetings for open discussion. Every student receives a personal advisor who serves to motivate, monitor, and communicate with a student and their family. Options gives its students opportunities to engage with the community which often leads to students developing mentorships and partnerships outside of the school setting.

Marion Academy

[Marion Academy](#) is a charter school network with three campuses that opened in 2015. The Marion Academy Open Campus is an alternative school that serves students who have been suspended or expelled from Indianapolis Public Schools and districts in the surrounding suburbs. The Hillside Academy is located within the Marion County Juvenile Detention Center and serves students from across the state and beyond who are residing in the facility. The Pride Academy is located within the Resource Residential Treatment Facility, a mental health and psychiatric treatment center that serves students across the state and beyond.

Marion Academy prepares students to transition into postsecondary education and work, with a focus on college and career exploration and workplace readiness. Marion Academy offers the Core 40, Core 40 Honors, and the Core 40 Technical Honors Diplomas and encourages students to receive at least one industry-recognized certification. An Academic Life Coach is assigned to students and helps them develop an Individualized Learning Plan and identify career pathways. Students can also earn dual credits through Ivy Tech Community College or Vincennes University. Marion Academy emphasizes positive behavioral support for students and believes that the entire school community is responsible for helping students succeed. A unique feature of Marion Academy's approach to discipline is the De-escalation Room. The De-escalation Room is managed by the Academy's Behavior Specialist and allows students to take a moment and reflect on their behavior in a way that does not disrupt other students.

While students are detained in the Marion County Juvenile Detention Center, the Hillside Academy aims to provide quality educational services through standards-based education. Students can transition from Hillside Academy to Marion Academy's open campus, so learning is geared toward a smooth transition of skills and credit development.

Marion Academy also extends educational services to the Resource Residential Treatment Facility (RRTF), which provides comprehensive mental health and psychiatric treatment to youth who are experiencing emotional, behavioral, developmental, and psychiatric concerns.