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Indiana

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Indiana

Susan R. Adams

Indiana was admitted to the Union as the 19th state on December 11, 1816. Corydon, Indiana, located in southern Indiana, was the first state capitol until 1825, when the capital was moved to a more central location in Indianapolis. Indiana, located in the midwest, was formerly part of the Indiana Territory, dissolved in 1798. The first governor of the territory was William Henry Harrison, who served from 1800 until 1813. Harrison later became the 9th president of the United States, in 1840. Two constitutions have been ratified in Indiana: the first in 1816, and the current constitution in 1851. Indiana is only the 38th-largest of the 50 states geographically, but ranks 15th in the nation in population; the 2010 U.S. census indicates that 6,483,802 Hoosiers inhabit an area of 36,420 square miles. Historically, the primary economic engines have been agriculture, automobile production, and pharmaceutical production, although much of the past prosperity is also from the presence of natural resources, such as natural gas fields discovered in the 1880s. A former manufacturing hub because of its central location, abundant water, and the crisscrossing of hundreds of miles of railroads, Indiana is still renowned for its corn and soybean and limestone production, as the site of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, and as the home campus of the Eli Lilly world corporate headquarters.

Forced removal of Indiana's Native Americans in the 1840s resulted in a large influx of Europeans, many of whom are still represented in the current Indiana population; 1980 census data indicated that 42 percent of respondents identified their ancestral origins as German, 32 percent English, and 24 percent Irish. U.S. Census data from 2010 indicates that Hoosiers were 84.3 percent white, 9.1 percent African American, 1.6 percent Asian, 2.0 percent from a biracial or multiracial background, and 0.3 percent Native American. Hispanic or Latino of any race, the fastest growing demographic, made up 6 percent of the population. Since 2000, Indiana has shown the fourth-largest growth of English language learners (ELLs) in the nation, with 2010 U.S. census data indicating that 7.6 percent of respondents speak a language other than English at home. The second-largest language group is Spanish-speakers, representing 4.3 percent of the Hoosier population; 2.0 percent of Hoosiers reported that they speak an Indo-European language, with German or Pennsylvania Dutch German spoken by many Amish families in Indiana's northern regions.

K-12 Education in Indiana

Formal education in Indiana is not mandated until the age of 7 because Indiana does not fund public kindergarten or preschool. Indiana's first state constitution in 1816 provided for a state-funded public school system, the first state in the nation to do so. Currently, approximately half of Indiana's college students attend state-funded universities, with the largest being the Indiana University system, its flagship campus established in 1820 in Bloomington. In 1865, Indiana State was created as the state's Normal College for teacher preparation. In 1869, Purdue University was developed as a land-grant college for agricultural research. In addition,

Vincennes University, Ball State University, and the University of Southern Indiana were established in 1802, 1918, and 1965, respectively. Indiana also boasts a large number of private colleges and universities, most of which historically were established as religious institutions. These include: Notre Dame, Saint Francis, Marian, and Saint Mary of the Woods (Roman Catholic), and Anderson College, Butler University, Taylor, DePauw, Earlham, Valparaiso, Manchester, Hanover, and University of Evansville, which were founded by Protestant and evangelical churches.

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) indicates that there are currently 2024 public schools with a combined enrollment of 1,010,811 K-12 students. Of these enrolled, more than 820,000 are white, 125,000 are African American, and 48,000 are Hispanic or Latino. Less than 3,000 are Native American, while nearly 11,000 are Asian or Pacific Islander. By comparison, there are 742 private schools enrolling 115,866 pre-K-12 students, 84,000 of whom are white, less than 6,000 are African American, 3,600 are Hispanic or Latino, 111 are Native American, and 1,500 are Asian or Pacific Islander. It is estimated by the IDOE that more than 23,000 Hoosier children are homeschooled; in 2005, this was an increase of more than 400 percent over previous years, and is likely an underestimate because of under-reporting.

Current Issues

Indiana Public Law 105-2005 created a new pathway toward high school graduation through completion of a Core 40 diploma (with increased credit requirements in math, English/language arts, science, and social studies). State data from 2010 indicates that 84.1 percent of public school students graduated in four years. When broken down by racial and socioeconomic profiles, the 2010 data demonstrates that only 66 percent of African American students graduated in four years, while 68.9 percent of Hispanic or Latino students graduated with their age-mate cohort. Approximately 68 percent of those who receive free or reduced-cost lunch graduated, and only 58.6 percent of special education students graduated within four years. Females outperformed males, with 85.3 percent of females graduating in four years, versus only 77.7 percent of males graduating on time.

A 21-year longitudinal study by Victor A. Smith indicates steady improvement in Indiana's public education on such measures as attendance (95.9 percent), graduation (84.1 percent), SAT scores, ACT composite scores, NAEP assessments (at historic highs, except for fourth and eighth grade science), ISTEP (the state's standardized assessment) pass rates, numbers of graduates admitted to college, the numbers of honors and Core 40 diplomas granted. Despite overwhelming quantitative data showing consistent improvement, Governor Mitch Daniels and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Bennett claim that dismal school performance necessitates swift intervention by the state. Indiana has experienced an unprecedented wave of school reform measures passed in the Indiana General Assembly, and an explosion of charter schools, with the vast majority of charter schools opening in Indianapolis. Changes in school funding formulas resulted in school districts being forced to eliminate many basic services (e.g., bus service, and sports, music, and arts programs) and reductions in teaching forces (RIF) to

balance declining student budgets. In 2010, the Indiana General Assembly passed a bill permitting qualifying students to enroll in private schools through a state-funded voucher program. As the long-term consequences of the No Child Left Behind Act begin to take effect, IDOE has targeted six schools for state takeover, and an additional 104 schools and 76 school corporations will become eligible for state takeover in 2012.

Further Readings

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