Access and Limits

How Indiana actions changed educational opportunity

IS.1.28 "Analyze the significance of state programs, policies, and legal rulings designed to improve the lives of Hoosiers."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the state action in each paragraph, circle a group it could help, and write L beside one limit on its impact. Use your marks to weigh the significance of each action.

Who Gets an Opportunity to Learn?

1 Imagine trying to learn when your family cannot pay school tuition. Indiana's 1851 constitution directed lawmakers to create a general, uniform system of public schools with no tuition, open to all. This policy made education a state responsibility rather than a privilege purchased by each family. Tax support helped make regular schooling possible for more children. Yet the promise of equal access did not match reality: Indiana later required separate schools for Black children, and many faced unequal opportunities. The policy's significance lies both in expanding access and in showing that a written promise does not guarantee fair treatment.

2 More than a century later, Indiana addressed a different barrier: the cost of preschool. The state launched On My Way Pre-K as a pilot in 2015 to help eligible four-year-olds from lower-income families attend approved preschool programs. State support can give children early learning opportunities and help parents work or study while children are in class. Unlike a promise of free public schooling for all, this program targets families who meet eligibility rules. That focus directs limited resources toward children who might otherwise miss preschool, but families who do not qualify cannot receive the same assistance.

3 Another debate concerns where public education money may go. In 2013, the Indiana Supreme Court decided *Meredith v. Pence*, a challenge to the state's Choice Scholarship Program. The program lets eligible families use state-funded scholarships at participating private schools, including religious schools. The court ruled that the program did not violate Indiana's constitution. Its decision allowed families to keep using those scholarships, potentially widening school choices for eligible students. But a ruling that a program is legal does not prove that every family can use it or that it improves every school. Understanding its significance requires separating expanded choice from questions about who benefits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Why was the 1851 constitution's school policy significant, and what kept its promise of equal access from being fully met?

2. How could On My Way Pre-K improve lives, and why would its benefits not reach every family?

3. How did the ruling in *Meredith v. Pence* affect families' options? What does the ruling alone not prove?

4. Compare the 1851 school policy with On My Way Pre-K. How does each use state action to reduce a different cost barrier?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Propose one new Indiana policy to help students whose families have trouble getting to school or preschool. In one paragraph, explain how it would work, who it would help, and one limit it might have. Use an idea about access from the passage without copying an existing policy.

ANSWER KEY

Access and Limits

HIGH SCHOOL · IS.1.28

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the state action in each paragraph, circle a group it could help, and write L beside one limit on its impact. Use your marks to weigh the significance of each action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Why was the 1851 constitution's school policy significant, and what kept its promise of equal access from being fully met?	**It made tuition-free public schooling a state responsibility, expanding access. Separate schools for Black children meant the promise of equal access was not fully met.**
2	How could On My Way Pre-K improve lives, and why would its benefits not reach every family?	**It could help eligible children attend preschool and give their parents time to work or study. Families that do not meet the eligibility rules cannot receive the assistance.**
3	How did the ruling in *Meredith v. Pence* affect families' options? What does the ruling alone not prove?	**It allowed eligible families to continue using state-funded scholarships at participating private schools. The ruling does not prove that every family can use the program or that it improves every school.**
4	Compare the 1851 school policy with On My Way Pre-K. How does each use state action to reduce a different cost barrier?	**The 1851 policy called for public schools without tuition, reducing the cost of school for families. On My Way Pre-K helps eligible lower-income families pay for preschool.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Indiana could help school districts provide bus rides to preschool for families without reliable transportation. The state would pay part of the cost, and districts would plan routes to approved programs. This could help children attend regularly and make it easier for parents to work. It would not solve every access problem: families living far from a bus route might still struggle to get their children to a pickup stop.

Accept supported explanations that distinguish an action's intended benefit from limits on who could use it. For Part 3, look for a workable proposal, a clearly identified group, and a plausible limit.