Who Handles That?

Trace how Indiana government decisions affect a trip to school.

USG.3.13 "Explain the organization of state and local governments in Indiana and analyze how they affect the lives of citizens."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline each government body named in the passage and circle words that describe what it controls. Put a star beside two places that connect a body's work to students' travel.

A Safer Way to School

1 On a rainy Monday, students wait to cross a busy state highway on their way to school. In Indiana, state government has three branches with different jobs. The General Assembly, made up of a House and a Senate, passes state laws and sets the state budget. The governor leads the executive branch, whose agencies carry out laws. The Indiana Department of Transportation, or INDOT, manages state highways. State courts resolve legal disputes and decide how laws apply in cases before them. A student who wants a safer crossing needs to know which part of government controls the road.

2 Local government has layers too. A county government serves the entire county, including areas outside city and town limits. Its commissioners manage many county services and roads outside those limits, while its county council makes decisions about county spending. In a city, an elected mayor directs city departments, and a city council passes local ordinances and approves spending. Cities generally maintain city streets, not state highways. An Indiana public school corporation is another local government body: its school board sets policy and approves a budget for its schools. These separate bodies can make decisions that shape one student's trip to school.

3 Suppose the crossing is on a state highway inside a city. The city can ask INDOT to study a signal, but it cannot simply treat the highway as an ordinary city street. Students could send observations about traffic to INDOT. They could also ask the school board to review transportation policy for students who cross the highway. If a nearby route instead uses a county road outside city limits, county commissioners would be a better contact for road concerns. Which officials can act depends on both the type of road and the decision requested.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How are Indiana's three state branches organized by job, and which part of state government manages the highway in the passage?

2. Why would a concern about a county road outside city limits go to county commissioners rather than a city council?

3. How could INDOT and the city each take part in a request for a signal at the crossing?

4. Why would asking the school board to review transportation policy be different from asking INDOT about the crossing?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a school bus must detour because a county road outside city limits floods after storms. Write a short proposal naming two government bodies from the passage, explaining what each could do and why it has that role, and describing how your proposals would affect students.

ANSWER KEY

Who Handles That?

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline each government body named in the passage and circle words that describe what it controls. Put a star beside two places that connect a body's work to students' travel. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How are Indiana's three state branches organized by job, and which part of state government manages the highway in the passage?	**The General Assembly makes laws and sets the budget, the governor leads agencies that carry out laws, and courts resolve legal disputes. INDOT, an executive-branch agency, manages the state highway.**
2	Why would a concern about a county road outside city limits go to county commissioners rather than a city council?	**County commissioners manage county roads outside city limits. A city council handles city ordinances and spending, while cities generally maintain city streets.**
3	How could INDOT and the city each take part in a request for a signal at the crossing?	**The city could ask for a study, while INDOT manages the state highway where the signal is requested.**
4	Why would asking the school board to review transportation policy be different from asking INDOT about the crossing?	**The school board sets policy for its schools, which could affect how students travel. INDOT manages the state highway itself.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

County commissioners could ask county road staff to inspect the flooding and consider repairs because commissioners manage roads outside city limits. The school board could review transportation policy for flooded routes because it sets school policy. Road repairs could shorten the bus detour. A policy for using a safe alternate route could help students reach school while the road is flooded.

Accept proposals that assign county road concerns to county commissioners and school transportation policy to the school board. Students may also explain that the county council makes spending decisions if repairs need county funding.