

October 27, 2020

Dear Indiana State Legislator,

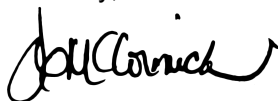
Over the course of my term as Indiana's last elected State Superintendent of Public Instruction, I have been committed to supporting student and educator-focused policy. This includes legislation drafted to meet the needs of all Hoosier students, including those most vulnerable. Although Indiana has become K-12 education policy-heavy, with little regard for implementation monitoring, I remain optimistic that sound education policies, designed with the best interest of students and educators in mind are possible. I leave this document to outline the critical policy actions that must be taken, regardless of who fills the seat of Indiana's top education leader. Our students deserve it, educators demand it, and our communities need it to ensure Indiana's future success.

Professional experiences have led to the identification of five core issues our state's K-12 ecosystem is facing. **EducationFIRST** represents five priority areas tied to detailed briefs providing an overview of the core issue, consequences for leaving the core issue unaddressed, and proposed legislative remedies.

- 1) **Funding**: Funding Indiana's K-12 schools must remain a top priority. State revenues will be down leading into the 2021 budget session, however legislators must remain invested in the future of Hoosier children and continue to provide them with the tools necessary to succeed whether in the workforce or in their postsecondary endeavors.
- 2) **Inclusivity**: An inclusive K-12 environment is vital to the success and safety of all students and staff. Indiana legislators must be committed to creating laws that provide a safe learning and work environment where all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect, regardless of their gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, or marital status.
- 3) **Reliable Connectivity**: While reliable connectivity for all students has been an issue for some time, it came to the forefront during the COVID-19 pandemic. Addressing Indiana's digital divide will increase engagement, and afford all Hoosiers access to mandated learning opportunities.
- 4) **Single Accountability**: Moving Indiana from two to one system for accountability ensures clarity and transparency related to the performance of our state's schools. Indiana's current accountability system excludes certain children that the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) system requires be included. Moving to one accountability system would allow schools to best address areas of need and eliminate confusion for educators, parents, and communities.
- 5) **Tighter Parameters for Charter and Choice**: Implementing tighter parameters for charter and choice schools makes sound fiscal sense and ensures better accountability measures. Legislators must enact laws that increase transparency for parents and teachers regarding the quality of both a charter school and its authorizer, while promoting sound fiscal responsibility.

Thank you for your partnership in putting **EducationFIRST** for the betterment of our students and schools, and our state.

Sincerely,



Dr. Jennifer McCormick
Superintendent of Public Instruction