TO: Superintendents, School Administrators, Chief Financial Officers & Data Personnel
FROM: Dr. John Keller, Chief Technology Officer
RE: Connecting the Data Dots for School Leaders
DATE: October 16, 2020

As the 2020-2021 school year has been full of challenges, there have also been some big changes surrounding data reporting and data usage. *Please review the information below. None of it is new, however, we are hoping to provide clarity and transparency as there could be local financial implications aligned to this information.*

Data Exchange System: In the Data Exchange, school leaders will be expected to certify school data. School leaders will also be held accountable for this data. The paper-based sign-off process is being replaced with digital signatures. These digital signatures will require individuals holding specific roles. Such roles will be granted at the local level to complete the data sign-off process by logging into Data Exchange. This will provide more security and traceability for data sign-offs in the new Data Exchange system.

It is important for individuals with the responsibility of state data submissions and sign-off to be up to speed on Indiana's data reporting shift, and what it means for your school district. ***This is not a small change.*** By the 2022-2023 school year we will turn off the former data collection system (STN Application Center) and run entirely on our new system -- Data Exchange. We appreciate your attention to these details. There are many resources available for you and your staff to learn about the new system and the relevant timelines.

> *Recommended Actions/Key Knowledge:*
> - *Ensure the school and district data teams are up to speed with all things Data Exchange.*
> - *Ask questions to ensure you are at the right comfort level in understanding the new system and the roll-out plan.*
> - *Know what data are to be submitted through the system this year (2020-2021). Hint: Non-certified employee counts, student attendance, calendar certification.*
> - *Know the status of your Student Information System's certification for Data Exchange.*

Attendance Reporting: We will be collecting attendance data through the Data Exchange at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. This is the first year for schools to report complete attendance records to the state. This means schools are expected to submit an attendance record for each day a student is enrolled in a school corporation, whether the student is absent or present. Specific guidance regarding attendance reporting was shared this summer and is referenced here. Because this data collection will require a record for each student for each day of attendance or absence, we are encouraging you to be sure your attendance data is well maintained and up-to-date. We are

highly recommending periodic reviews to ensure your attendance data is accurate. Fixing problems with this data will not be easy to do in the May/June time frame when it is submitted and certified. ***Please keep in mind this data may also be compared to the membership data submitted in the fall and spring. Ultimately, anomalous data may be submitted to the State Board of Accounts for review. If audit findings appear, your tuition support may be adjusted accordingly.***

  Recommended Actions/Key Knowledge:
  - *Confirm student attendance is being taken daily using all of the relevant codes indicated in the memo above.*
  - *Conduct an attendance audit for your school or corporation. Do the percent (%) of students with each attendance code on a given day match the reality of student attendance?*
  - *Confirm attendance policies for in-person and virtual/remote attendance are being followed as attendance is recorded in your Student Information System.*
  - *At the end of the semester, compare virtual/remote attendance rates with student statuses on the September ADM report.* ***Please keep in mind this data may also be compared to the membership data submitted in the fall and spring. Ultimately, anomalous data may be submitted to the State Board of Accounts for review. If audit findings appear, your tuition support may be adjusted accordingly.***

Student Addresses and Residence Verification: The importance of verifying and maintaining accurate student addresses cannot be overstated. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) sent out [recommendations about student address verification](#) early in the 2020-2021 school year. Accurate and well-maintained data about where students live is becoming increasingly important for the following reasons:
- Renewed concerns about providing educational services to (and receiving tuition support for) non-resident students.
- Distribution of public benefits under pandemic relief programs and other state agency programs.
- Identification of home internet access options for all students.

  Recommended Actions/Key Knowledge:
  - *Establish a plan to get your school or corporation into 100 percent compliance with the [address verification recommendations](#).*
  - *Identify opportunities within existing operational processes to verify home addresses for students.*

Course Completion Report: By December 1, 2020, IDOE will be releasing a newly *required* report with school level counts of students reported on membership but not completing courses. Details of this reporting requirement can be found here. This report will cover the 2019-2020 school year. This data may also be compared to the membership data submitted in the fall and spring. Ultimately, data from Course Completion is one piece of information that can be used to identify if educational services were delivered on a student-by-student basis. ***Please keep in mind this data may be considered when evaluating funding distribution and/or to substantiate any State Board of Accounts audit process. Ultimately, anomalous data may be submitted to the State Board of Accounts for review. If audit findings appear, your tuition support may be adjusted accordingly.***

> *Recommended Actions/Key Knowledge:*
> - *Make sure the course completion reporting to IDOE is complete for all students and reflects outcomes of each student's course taking.*
> - *Conduct a self-assessment to understand the reasons behind any student who is reported for membership and funding purposes to the state but who is without course completions or reports very few course completions. These anomalies should be well understood and documented at the local level.*

Identifying Staff Types (Roles) in the LINK Portal: Finally, we need to remind you of the importance of keeping your Staff Types (Roles) up-to-date in the LINK Portal. Schools and corporations are now responsible for maintaining the assignment of these Staff Types (Roles) in order to provide access to new systems as they come online and ultimately provide access to all IDOE systems as we migrate all of our services into the LINK portal. This means if your staff members contact IDOE requesting access to IDOE systems available through the LINK portal, they will be referred back to the local security coordinators in each school or corporation who will need to provide that access by assigning them the appropriate Staff Type (Role) in the LINK security portal. IDOE distributed guidance about this process earlier this year and are simply reminding you.

> *Recommended Actions/Key Knowledge:*
> - *Communicate with your staff regarding how Staff Types (Roles) will be maintained. Which individuals in your school or corporation are responsible for maintaining this information in the LINK portal.*