



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Dr. Jennifer McCormick
Superintendent of Public Instruction

Working Together for Student Success

Dear Indiana Stakeholders,

Across the state and the country an achievement gap exists in our most vulnerable student groups. Indiana is no exception to the existence of this gap. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) prioritizes the inclusion and support for all students. Indiana's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan reflects the importance and level of priority this gap holds under my administration. The current data regarding proficiency for students of color and students in poverty illustrates a significant gap and need for immediate measures to address this gap.

Indiana's achievement gap goes beyond low academic achievement and is evident in disproportionate numbers of suspensions and expulsions, access to rigorous courses, and equity in resources across the state.

Implicit bias regarding students of color is driving the disparity between this group and their counterparts throughout school systems nation-wide. IDOE is committed to providing Indiana educators with up-to-date, researched-based resources and training in the area of cultural competency and equipping educators with skills to better engage students of color and their families. IDOE's Cultural Competency Resource page serves as a hub for educators to become versed in research and practices to meet the varied needs of our student groups. This website is a curation of the most relevant and appropriate resources. Additionally, IDOE offers educators ongoing professional development in culturally responsive teaching through both live and virtual options. A conference titled, *Overcoming the Achievement Gap Trap* with leading expert Anthony Muhammed, has been scheduled for Fall 2020.

An additional cultural competency-related effort underway includes the use of Brown University's Framework for Culturally Responsive Teaching included in IDOE's templates for schools to complete for the annual Comprehensive Needs Assessment and School Improvement Plan. These plans are required from Indiana schools that have shown gaps in student achievement.

Educationally yours,

Dr. Jennifer McCormick
Indiana State Superintendent of Public Instruction