

Quality Education Day at Indiana Statehouse
February 19, 2015
Governor Mike Pence Remarks
As Prepared for Delivery

Thank you, Hoosiers for Quality Education President and CEO Betsy Wiley for that introduction and your hard work on education matters here in Indiana.

As we gather today to celebrate the opportunity for quality education for all Hoosiers, I want to take a moment to give a quick shout out to some of the schools gathered here in our Statehouse:

- 21st Century Charter School at Gary
- Calvary Christian School
- Christel House
- Frontiers International
- Hasten Hebrew Academy
- Herron High School
- Indianapolis Academy of Excellence
- IPS 105
- Little Flower Catholic School
- Lutheran South Unity School
- Manuel High School
- Saint Paul Parish School Marion
- South Bend Hebrew Day Academy
- Xavier School of Excellence

To the students, staff, teachers, advocates and parents—thank you for being here today to show your support for quality education opportunities.

I'd like to take a few minutes to talk about a school in our midst today that goes above and beyond in serving and educating its students—Herron High School. Led by Principal Janet McNeal, Herron was selected as a finalist for the Institute for Quality Education's Quality Matters effort.

In its first year, the Quality Matters school award recognized quality in five areas: strong leadership, high expectations, a safe environment, emphasis on skill mastery, and frequent assessments of student progress. It is apparent to me—looking out at these students, teachers, and parents—that quality does matter at Herron.

I think it's safe to say that quality, in a very real sense, is the driving force behind every teacher, every lesson, and every class at Herron, as it is in schools represented here today and other schools all across Indiana.

And quality is what brings us all together today. I believe the best opportunity we can give Hoosiers is a strong education, which leads to a brighter future.

Here in Indiana, high school graduation rates are up, ISTEP scores have increased, and Indiana ranked second in the nation in total growth on NAEP—the nation’s report card.

And, four years after its launch, Indiana has the largest school voucher program in America, serving nearly 30,000 students. Four out of five of these voucher students are enrolled in A or B schools.

Now, my philosophy of executive leadership is pretty simple; you set big goals, offer solutions, but stay open to other ideas about how to achieve them.

- With that approach in mind, and with more than 100,000 kids in underperforming or failing schools, we must make it our aim to have 100,000 more students enrolled in high-quality schools by the year 2020.
- To achieve this goal, we must fund excellence, expand choices, and ensure that education in Indiana works at the highest levels.
- That’s why I proposed more state dollars for K-12 education than ever before, increasing tuition support by \$200 million over the next two years.
- And building on the historic first step we took last session, we will invest \$10 million a year to fund scholarships for our new pre-K pilot, because every Hoosier child deserves to start school ready to learn.
- We are seeking to adjust funding for public charter schools that will allow more communities in Indiana to offer more choices for families and their kids, and attract more investment for education innovation in Indiana – investment that is currently going to other states.
- And, we will improve the largest school choice program in America by lifting the arbitrary \$4,800 cap on the dollar amount for vouchers and supporting efforts to raise the cap on the choice scholarship tax credit program.

- We want to get more good teachers in more classrooms. So how do you get more good teachers like my wife? You get more good teachers by paying good teachers more.
- And that's just what we have been doing. This year we awarded \$30 million in bonuses to teachers in 1300 schools.
- Building on that success, we will provide another \$63 million for performance bonuses and refocus resources on the classroom. More freedom for our schools and more dollars in our classrooms will pay dividends for generations.
- And, because education is a state and local function, I believe that giving private schools the ability to choose their own test is reflective of that principle while still maintaining comparability and accountability.

To the faculty and staff here today, thank you for your commitment to education. Your work is guiding Indiana's next generation of leaders—men and women who will help Indiana shine for generations to come. As Governor of this great state, I offer my profound gratitude.

To the parents, we appreciate your persistence in ensuring a quality education for your child. We are proud of their work thus far and remain dedicated to their equally bright future.

To Hoosiers for Quality Education, an affiliate organization of the Institute for Quality Education, thank you for shining the spotlight on some of our state's most well-deserving schools. You understand the importance of a top-notch education when it comes to succeeding in life, and we are thrilled to have you, your insights, and your expertise as part of our community.

And finally to the students here today—congratulations. You are earning an exceptional education, one that will take you far in life. But, even more than that, your schools have the tools to help guide you, to help you find you and what you stand for, and help you reach your full potential. Take advantage of that. Talk to your teachers, your guidance counselors, your parents or guardians—set goals and reach for them because it's never too soon to start realizing your dreams.

So much of what we as a state aim to achieve for all Hoosier kids echoes what the Institute for Quality Education and Hoosiers for Quality Education promote and Herron High School and other schools across our state are accomplishing.

Thank you for the opportunity to address you all today on the importance of ensuring quality education opportunities for all Hoosiers.