



Indiana Department of Education

Glenda Ritz, NBCT
Indiana Superintendent of Public Instruction

MEMORANDUM

TO: Brian Bailey, State Budget Director
Office of Management and Budget

FROM: Glenda Ritz, Superintendent of Public Instruction
Indiana Department of Education

DATE: August 15, 2014

SUBJECT: Agency Overview – Budget Transmittal Letter

Introduction

The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) is charged with the critical role of providing support and guidance to Indiana's public schools to ensure that all of Indiana's K-12 students are college and career ready by the time they leave high school. To ensure that this happens, the IDOE is committed to building an education system of equity and high quality focused on student-centered accountability.

The Department assists and empowers schools and school districts to identify school improvement needs to be addressed in the areas of technology, best instructional practices, professional development, academic achievement and growth, college and career opportunities, literacy, and school climate and safety.

Indiana Department of Education's Priority Focus

To ensure the IDOE provides an equitable and high quality education system focused on student centered accountability, the Department has enhanced monitoring and technical assistance through new and highly trained Outreach Coordinators who have been hired from and live in the regions they serve to meet school improvement needs. Additionally, the Department worked with educators from across the state of Indiana, higher education, and employers on a new set of standards to ensure all students are college- and career-ready. The standards were approved by the Indiana Education Roundtable and the Indiana State Board of

Education in April 2014. In partnership with the Indiana General Assembly and the Governor's Office, the Department has spearheaded the work on the new, more transparent and fair school accountability system. In addition, a new subcommittee of the State Board of Education on assessments was appointed by the Superintendent to help advise the Department on the creation a new assessment system aligned with the recently adopted Indiana standards.

The Department also remains committed to improving the quality of education for Indiana students, teachers and families through increasing the standards for teacher licensing and teacher preparation.

Challenges and How We Will Meet Them

While we remain committed to these important priorities discussed above, it has become increasingly apparent that in order to build a high quality and equitable education system there needs to be a focus on sufficient funding for public education, more affordable instructional materials for our most needy students, closing the digital divide and protecting our students' data, getting more resources to schools to work with our English language learners, and enhancing teacher quality through better professional development opportunities.

As technology becomes increasingly a central educational tool, our schools are not on equal footing in terms of access and quality. Challenges to the IDOE include the collection and maintenance of up-to-date data on schools' technological capacity and offerings, as well as serving as a resource to locals for finding solutions to their technology needs. This challenge can be addressed through coordination between IDOE's professional education technology staff, the Regional Outreach Coordinators, and communities.

In addition to technological challenges faced by local school corporations, there is a real need for the IDOE to update its own IT infrastructure. These upgrades are necessary in order to ensure safe storage of students' personal data through strong security measures that will prevent data breaches. While the IDOE faces a greater demand to collect and share unidentifiable student data, there must be an investment in the IDOE's technological infrastructure.

With 22% of Indiana's children living in poverty, there is a greater need for funding to public schools to meet the needs of our students and keep up with the costs of running schools, provide families with relief for textbook and instructional materials costs, and get much needed resources to the ever growing population of English language learners. Indiana's increasingly diverse student population combined with the unacceptably high number of our children living in poverty demands urgent action on meeting the needs of Indiana's public schools.

Professional development for educators has been defunded and neglected in recent years as more resources have been allocated to testing. In order for Indiana to compete on the national and global stages, we must have the most well-prepared and best educators in our classrooms.

This requires providing ongoing support and training in an ever-changing, globally competitive world. This can be achieved through funding quality professional development opportunities directly to school districts.

Priority Requests

DOE is committed to providing an equitable and high quality education system focused on student-centered accountability. In order to meet this commitment, the Department has outlined the following priority focus areas:

- Sufficient funding for public education
- Providing more affordable instructional materials for our neediest students
- Closing the digital divide and safeguarding our children's data
- Ensuring quality instruction for all of Indiana's children, especially those in low-performing schools (*this includes Non-English speaking students*)
- Fully funding the new assessment system