



Dear XXXXXX XXXXX,

Our goal remains to partner with you, our state leaders, by being a credible resource from the field on matters related to educating our children. We offer to provide feedback to help minimize negative financial or organizational consequences stemming from even the best-intended public policy. We are in a unique position to share “boots on the ground” information on how new public policy will play out at the local level. To that end, we also want to draw attention to some common pressing interests to all educators, families, communities, and above all, students of Indiana.

With this being a budget year, we realize funding the new biennium is the focal point of this session. We know that you will encounter far more requests for funding than there will be funds available. We also understand the difficult decision-making that goes into choosing where the funds go and what good ideas, crucial supports, or services must go unfunded. We understand this because once we know what our funding will be, we have to make those same decisions. How high will class sizes have to be? What programming will need to be cut? What programs will need to be added due to new legislation and how much? And what level of support will we be able to give special populations of students who need extra help to be successful.

The most important staff member in any school district is the teacher. We refer to the moment when the teacher meets the student in the classroom as the “point of contact.” Everything we do in the rest of the organization is to make that point of contact a special moment and place for students to learn and grow. Success in the education space is the direct result of the skill of the teacher who is highly trained, supported, and has the resources needed to make the magic happen. Unfortunately, the number of young people entering the profession continues to dwindle. This is the first year in the last seven that schools of education in Indiana are reporting a slight increase in students entering their programs after years of plummeting numbers. The teacher shortage is real and again, classrooms across Indiana started school this year without a licensed teacher in their classrooms. We offer to work alongside you and other stakeholders to turn this trend around. With so much at stake, it is imperative that we inspire, encourage and incentivize young people to commit to the high calling of a profession in education.

Listed below are some common interests that we believe are imperative to keep Indiana schools moving forward in a positive direction and we are happy to share, discuss, and serve as a resource in any and all of these areas. Feel free to call at any time if our input may be helpful. We thank you for your service to the people of Indiana and especially our kids.

**While we offer to help with any policy considerations related to education, here are some examples of common interests we have identified:**

1. We support a foundation increase for all districts that enables funding to keep pace with inflation. We would also encourage you to fully fund our increasing number of Multi-Language Learners, Special Education Students, Textbook Costs, Summer School Programming, and increase the Indiana School Safety Grant.
2. We support enhancement of the education profession. We believe educator recruitment and retention should remain a top consideration when developing education policy. Thoroughly evaluating all policy proposals through this lens should be the priority. We can set Indiana apart by sending clear messages to current and future educators that they are valued, trusted, and we have their backs. We must seize the opportunity to compassionately restore the higher calling of being a professional educator.

3. We encourage you to support teacher professional development by local districts to meet the requirements of the Early Literacy Endorsement for all elementary educators.
4. We encourage you to hold all schools and programs utilizing state tax dollars equally accountable through the State Board of Accounts and the Indiana Department of Education.
5. We encourage you to revise the School Referendum Ballot Language to be more transparent for voters. In our last referendum cycle, voters in our community were upset about the misleading language on the ballot.
6. We encourage giving public schools seamless access to “On My Way Pre-K” programming. We support any efforts to make early preschool education a priority in our state.
7. Make Accrual (GAAP) Accounting optional for the 15 large corporations required to use this method of accounting. We believe IC 5-1-11.5-3 should be amended and made optional to include all school districts. Currently, this section requires school corporations with an ADM of more than 15,000 students to prepare an annual financial report using the modified accrual basis of accounting that yields no tangible benefits for most entities. This requirement has resulted in an average annual cost increase of \$100,000 for consultant services and consuming approximately 900 hours of additional work for our finance team with no known benefit.

Thank you for your commitment to the education of the children of Indiana. We at Carmel Clay Schools stand ready to partner with you and we are committed to doing our part to promote Indiana as a destination where educators are valued, respected, and supported, as well as, a place with strong schools where families want to live and raise their children.



Michael Beresford, Ed.D.  
Superintendent  
Carmel Clay Schools



Kristin Kouka  
Legislative Liaison & ISBA Legislative Delegate  
Carmel Clay School Board