

Dear XXXXXX XXXXX,

We were very fortunate to fill all of our open teaching positions in Carmel Clay Schools this school year; however, the number of applicants for open positions continues to decline due to the teacher shortage. Did you know that families across Indiana received letters from their schools this past fall informing them that they were unable to find a certified teacher for their child's classroom and a substitute would be covering the class while they continued to search? At the time of this letter, our state has 1,152 open teacher positions posted. It is hard to imagine any school leader in Indiana having to send that letter and even a harder for the parents who received one.

The volume of open positions in Indiana schools, even now in the middle of the school year, reinforces the seriousness of the educator shortage. The number of young people choosing education as a career pathway continues to be far short of the need making this an even more critical time in Indiana's educational history. 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 and encourage young people to commit to a profession in education.

We believe educator recruitment and retention must be 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. Past initiatives to increase interest in STEM, Career Technical Education, and partnerships with workforce have been successful, yet all depend on the education pipeline. Unfortunately, the pipeline is nowhere near capacity. It's time to shift the priority to attracting young people into the profession and to retain the effective educators that we are unfortunately losing to other professions and early retirement.

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 also offer to provide feedback to help minimize negative financial or organizational consequences stemming from even the best-intended 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.

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

Workforce: Our schools continue to be the foundation for the future Indiana workforce and an important component of economic health. With teaching positions at critical shortage levels and with high-need positions nearly non-existent, immediate action is needed. Alignment with higher education to develop effective, efficient, and high quality teacher preparation programs is a key collaboration needed to grow our educator workforce.

Regulatory Relief: Indiana Educators must navigate 450+ mandates in Title 20 of the Indiana Code and 511 of the Indiana Administrative Code that are without expiration. Regulatory relief allows administrators and educators to maximize their focus on student learning and meeting the unique needs of their communities. Educational policies should be reviewed for widespread efficiency and effectiveness and then renewed or discontinued.

On My Way Pre-K: Exemptions for K-12 Schools to provide early interventions and eliminate barriers to early learning to provide greater access to appropriations.

Referendum Language: Having just gone through the renewal of our referendum, we witnessed first-hand the confusion and frustration from voters due to the remarkably misleading ballot language required by Indiana Code. Improvements in language and permissible communications would be a big step forward in ensuring voters are informed before heading to the polls.

GAAP Accounting: It is recommended IC 5-1-11.5-3 be repealed. 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 yield no tangible benefits for the entities involved. This requirement has resulted in an average annual cost increase of \$114,000 and consuming approximately 900 hours of staff time for CCS.

Student Safety: Multiple layers are needed to address the safety needs of students. We are fortunate to have at least one highly trained School Resource Officer in every school in our district. They serve as the one person whose focused responsibility is on keeping the school safe. It is our responsibility to use all tools available to create a safe environment. Creating pathways and eliminating barriers to the flow of information between entities like juvenile probation, the Department of Child Services, and schools would offer much needed collaboration for struggling students and families.

Once again, thank you for your commitment to the education of the children of Indiana. We at Carmel Clay Schools stand ready to partner with you as a resource from the field on all matters related to educating our children. 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 kids.



Michael Beresford, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Carmel Clay Schools



Katie Browning
Legislative Liaison & ISBA Legislative Delegate
Carmel Clay School Board