

Superintendent News

WARRICK COUNTY SCHOOL CORPORATION
ADMINISTRATION CENTER

This Edition:

WCSC Earns an A!
Governor Pence Decides To
Opt Out of Pre-School
Grant Opportunity

Politics, Not Best Practice, Still Pacing Indiana Education

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A few weeks ago, in an unexpected move, Indiana Governor Mike Pence announced Indiana would not seek federal grant dollars to expand pre-school offerings here in Indiana. The grant, which could have provided up to 80 million dollars to fund additional pre-school programs, would have provided pre-school access to an additional 4,700 Hoosier students. The decision is baffling at best, frustrating and unbelievable at worst. The grant required no matching monies from the state, and would have been a great opportunity to expand pre-school services in our state. Indiana ranks near the very bottom for pre-school programming in the country. The decision caught many by surprise, as Governor Pence had spoken in favor of pre-school programs, and made a commitment to offering more pre-school programs just months earlier. Pre-school education is an excellent opportunity for students to enter kindergarten prepared to learn. And while I will be the first to say not every child needs pre-school, many do. For our high risk students, pre-school is the best, and sometimes only, chance to enter school prepared to learn. Without pre-school these students begin their K-12 educational career trying to play catch up, which is frustrating for them, teachers, and parents alike. Why would we deny our most needy students the opportunity to begin school prepared to succeed? The only answer is politics.

Another prime example of politics leading Indiana education is our new state standards and new assessment test. Indiana opted out of adopting Common Core and adopted College and Career Readiness standards. Unfortunately, those standards are nothing more than Common Core on steroids. Thanks to this political gamesmanship, Indiana will now pay testing companies hundreds of millions more dollars to develop an assessment test measuring our "unique" set of standards. This spring, when statewide testing begins, Hoosier students will be exposed to a completely different version of the ISTEP+ test. The only winners in all of this are politicians and the California-based testing companies. Hoosier taxpayers, students, teachers, and schools are once again the big losers. Teachers are scrambling to map curriculum to the new standards, trying to understand a new assessment tool, and trying to determine what data from last year's testing is meaningful and which data is now useless. Politicians shout that teachers should use data to drive instruction, and I agree with that, but then quit changing the test every other year so the data is actually relevant and meaningful. Each time we change the test, educators start over in developing and compiling data. It's expensive and senseless!

Yet, through all of this, the students and schools of the Warrick County School Corporation continue to excel. The DOE finally released corporation and school grades last week. I'm proud to say that the WCSC earned another A grade and that 12 of our 16 schools also earned an A grade. I want to thank our students, teachers, parents, and support staff personnel for their hard work, efforts, and dedication to being the very best. It is a pleasure and honor to work with you and by your side, serving the students of our county. Thank you, and congratulations!

Brad Schneider, Superintendent