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## Marion County Superintendents

Dr. Paul Kaiser, Beech Grove

Dr. Debbie Sullivan, Decatur

Dr. Flora Reichanadter, Franklin

Dr. Peggy Hinckley, IPS Interim

Dr. Concetta Raimondi, Lawrence

Dr. Thomas J. Little Jr., Perry

Mr. Nathaniel Jones, Pike

Mr. Kenneth Hull, Speedway

Dr. Dena Cushenberry, Warren

Dr. Nikki Woodson, Washington

Dr. Jeff Butts, Wayne

3/13/2013

Dear Community Member:

While the efforts of the Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF) study are noble, and the findings are meant to assist districts in leveraging support and resources for demographic areas of students with the highest need, the information is not new information to the 11 Marion County school districts.

As district leaders, each of us is intimately aware of the demographics we serve. Each district provides targeted support to meet the needs of all children. Each district offers some form of choice that allows parents the opportunity to select the best “seat” for their child.

The information released in this study is information that is currently provided by the Indiana Department of Education and we use this information daily to direct our resources, to create and revise our school improvement plans, and to guide our strategic plans. We also incorporate the voice of our stakeholders into these processes. The result has been evident in the rise of graduation rates across Indianapolis, the number of innovative learning environments in each district has increased, and accountability is at an all-time high.

We also have the following concerns about the study:

- The methodology used is based on the A-F Grading Model, a flawed system that is currently under revision at the Indiana Statehouse. This model does not take into account the richness of diversity that school districts in urban areas like ours so passionately embrace.
- The study breaks the city into 42 geographic areas, ranking them according to the number of “seats” available. Dividing Indianapolis into geographic areas does nothing more than highlight disparities in income

and educational attainment level. It is not an indication of the quality of education available.

Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF) has issued similar recommendations in St. Louis, Denver, Milwaukee, Kansas City and Washington, D.C. A recent Washington Post article cast light on some of the flaws in the solutions Illinois Facilities Fund (IFF) offers. According to the article, referring to the Illinois Facilities Fund's (IFF) ranking and recommendations, "Their only predictable results would be the disruption of the lives of thousands of students and families."

Indianapolis is poised to be an educational model of excellent traditional public education for communities across the country. The strength of our schools comes from our students, families, staff members and community partners who understand the challenges we face every day, challenges we are overcoming student by student, day by day.

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