



October 16, 2013

Senate President Pro Tempore David Long
House Speaker Brian Bosma
State House
200 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

RE: LSA Support for Calculating A-F Grades

Dear Senator Long and Speaker Bosma,

We are writing to express our concern regarding the delay by the Indiana Department of Education (“Department”) in providing A-F Grades for the 2012-2013 school year to the State Board of Education (“Board”), and to request the assistance of Legislative Services Agency (“LSA”) in calculating the grades in time for the Board’s official approval this November.

As members of the Board, we send this letter out of concern for ensuring that school accountability information is provided to Indiana schools, educators, and families in as timely a manner as possible. We are now mid-way through October, and the Department has yet to report 2012-2013 A-F grades or release teacher effectiveness ratings as required under Indiana law.

Although the typical A-F calculation timeline may have been affected by the ISTEP testing interruptions that occurred this past spring, the validity studies on ISTEP data were completed by the testing vendor (CTB/McGraw-Hill) and the Department’s independent third-party expert in July. At that point, the Department was in a position to rely upon ISTEP data for purposes of calculating A-F grades, which the Department’s staff has stated takes no more than three days. However, it wasn’t until September that the Department finally released the underlying accountability data for schools and corporations. Now, almost a full month later, the Department still has not provided preliminary A-F grades or teacher effectiveness ratings.

The delay in providing A-F grades prevents schools, educators, and families from having important information related to their school’s overall performance. Moreover, without the calculation of A-F grades, Indiana cannot comply with state and federal accountability requirements. Finally, without the release of grades, the Department cannot identify updated Focus and Priority schools, which receive increased support from the Department, and the Board is not able to identify schools for which it is statutorily required to hold a hearing and consider interventions pursuant to Ind. Code 20-31-9-4.

The delay in teacher effectiveness ratings similarly prevents local school corporations from identifying their most successful teachers, as well as teachers who may need targeted supports to improve their instructional methods. In addition, teacher effectiveness ratings are a factor in compensation models that are part of the prior year's collective bargaining agreement, so the postponed release of teacher effectiveness ratings delays salary increases for Hoosier teachers.


Because we are nearing November, and preliminary A-F grades have not yet been provided to schools to start the clock on the month-long appeals and review process, the Board respectfully requests that LSA enter into a data sharing MOU with the Department and calculate A-F grades for the 2012-2013 school year **as soon as possible**. We know that LSA recreated the A-F system as part of the Grew-Sheldrake review of the 2011-2012 grade calculations, we therefore believe that LSA is in an excellent position to provide an alternative solution to the continued postponement of the release of A-F grades by the Department.

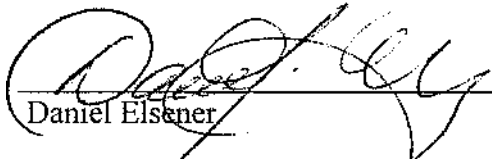
Respectfully submitted,

Indiana State Board of Education Members

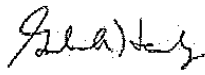
(Please see signatures below)

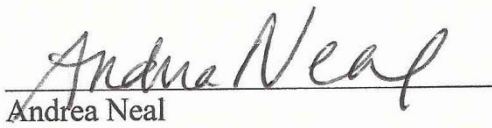
Cc: Governor Mike Pence
Superintendent of Public Instruction Glenda Ritz
Senator Dennis Kruse
Representative Robert Behning


Troy Albert

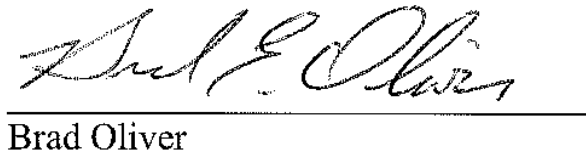

Daniel Elsener

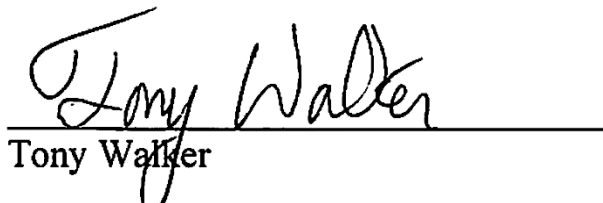

David Freitas

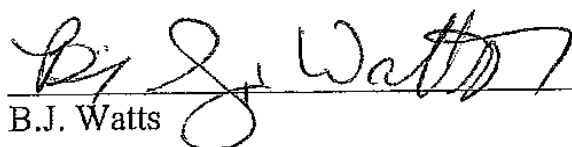

Gordon Hendry

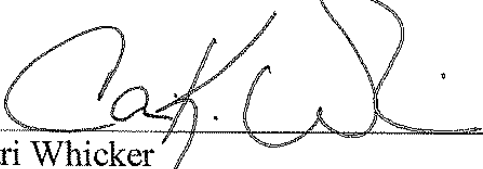

Andrea Neal


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