

## Plan to Fund and Modernize our Public Education System

### . More Equitable School Funding

**Need:** Schools in low-income areas often receive less funding, leading to disparities in resources, technology, and extracurricular opportunities.

**Solution:** Reform the school funding formula to ensure equitable distribution based on student needs, not just property taxes.

You can achieve this by doing the following

Make it more equitable by ensuring that schools in lower-income areas receive adequate per-pupil funding that reflects their higher needs (e.g., higher rates of special education, English language learners, and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds).

Decrease reliance on local property taxes, which tend to benefit wealthier districts. A more centralized or state-equalized funding model can help redistribute resources more fairly.

### **Increase State Investment in Public Education**

Increase overall education funding with specific earmarks for under-resourced schools.

Provide grants for technology upgrades, facility improvements, and staffing in low-income districts.

### **Support for Teachers in Low-Income Schools**

Offer salary incentives, loan forgiveness, or housing support for teachers who work in high-need areas.

Provide ongoing professional development and support to retain high-quality educators.

### **Invest in Extracurricular and Enrichment Programs**

Create state-level or private-public partnerships to fund extracurricular activities, arts, and sports in low-income schools.

Encourage nonprofit and community organizations to supplement these efforts.

### **Data Transparency and Accountability**

Require districts to report detailed, school-level financial data to track equity in spending.

Use this data to target support and adjust funding allocations as needed.

## Technology Access and Modernized Classrooms

- **Need:** Many rural and underfunded schools lack up-to-date technology or sufficient internet access.
- **Solution:** Expand statewide broadband access and invest in digital tools, STEM labs, and updated curriculum materials.

This can be achieved through,

### **Expand Access to Technology and Infrastructure**

Fund initiatives to ensure every student has access to reliable internet and modern learning devices.

Support school-wide infrastructure upgrades in older, underfunded buildings.

### Mental Health and School Safety Resources

- **Need:** Students face increasing mental health challenges, but access to school counselors and psychologists is limited.
- **Solution:** Hire more mental health professionals, expand social-emotional learning programs, and provide trauma-informed training for teachers.

### Career & College Readiness

- **Need:** Many high school graduates are unprepared for college or the workforce.
- **Solution:** Expand dual-credit programs, apprenticeships, and vocational pathways. Strengthen partnerships between schools, community colleges, and local employers.

### Support for Public Education

- **Need:** Indiana has one of the largest school voucher programs in the U.S., which has diverted funds from public to private institutions.
- **Solution:** Ensure accountability for voucher-funded schools and reinvest in public school infrastructure, staffing, and student support.

### Family and Community Engagement

- **Need:** Parents and communities are often disconnected from education policy and school governance.
- **Solution:** Create more accessible, transparent forums for parental input and offer resources for supporting students at home.

Both support for public education as well as family and community engagement can both been seen as one in the same while they are technically different. Its true support comes from our legislative bodies (city, county, state) in the form of legislation (funding, curriculum, teacher pay, and safety and security).

However, the MAIN support and engagement comes from family and friends of not just the staff but also the students. Some of the ways we can increase support for public schools is,

### **Community and Stakeholder Engagement**

Involve parents, educators, and local leaders in decision-making to ensure solutions reflect community needs.

Encourage corporate and philanthropic partnerships to help fund specific local initiatives.

Pass a proposal called "Classroom Essentials Support Act"

**Goal:** Eliminate the need for Indiana teachers to personally finance classroom supplies.

### **Dedicated Classroom Supply Grants**

Create a state-funded supply stipend (e.g., \$500–\$1,000 per teacher annually) for all public-school teachers.

Allow funds to roll over year to year, encouraging bulk or long-term planning.

### **How to Fund:**

Allocate from the Indiana state education budget.

Supplement with corporate tax incentives to fund classroom supplies (e.g., "Adopt-a-Classroom" business partnerships).

### **Centralized Purchasing & Distribution**

Establish a statewide bulk purchasing program for common school supplies to reduce costs and ensure equity.

Create regional supply hubs or online catalogs where teachers can order items directly from an approved list, funded by the state.

### **Public-Private Supply Partnership Program**

Launch an "**Indiana Classroom Champions**" initiative to invite businesses and nonprofits to contribute directly to classroom supply needs in designated districts.

Offer recognition, tax breaks, and publicity in exchange for ongoing support.

### **District-Level "Teacher Supply Accounts"**

Require school districts to set aside annual budgets for teacher-requested supplies.

Teachers submit needs at the start of each term; the district makes purchases on their behalf.

### **The benefits of these proposals are**

Reduces the financial burden on teachers.

Promotes equity between schools in different income areas.

Boosts teacher morale, recruitment, and retention.

Improves classroom readiness and learning conditions for students

An example of the process and timeline of said policies would look something like this.

### **Example Implementation Plan (Year 1 Rollout)**

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Action</b>
Q1	Pass legislation; identify funding mechanisms and supply needs survey
Q2	Develop centralized purchasing system and district accounts
Q3	Launch pilot program in 5-10 high-need districts
Q4	Statewide launch; open classroom supply request portal