

State of Indiana

Senate

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President Pro Tempore
Rules and Legislative Procedure, Chair

August 6, 2020

Dear School Leaders,

As schools across Indiana make preparations for and begin to return to school, I want to express my appreciation for the effort our schools have made to get back to the business of educating our children. The last few months have been incredibly challenging. I am also aware the next several weeks may be equally as challenging as we observe how effective the precautions and protocols put in place are in helping slow the advance of COVID-19 in Indiana's schools. The uncertainty can produce anxiety in administrators, teachers and the students and their families.

With some public schools looking to adjust their reopening plans for the 2020-21 school year, there have been many questions as to the level of funding. I want to make sure that school leaders understand the current state law for school funding as it pertains to virtual instruction, and how their school's FY 2021 funding may be impacted by their reopening decisions.

Current state law stipulates that schools will receive 85% of the normal foundation funding for any student who receives at least half of his or her instruction virtually. Changing this policy would require legislation to be passed by the General Assembly in our next session.

State leaders have said we favor fully funding students whose families choose virtual instruction this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I believe there is a strong appetite for making that change. However, there is no guarantee such an exception will be made for schools that don't give families the option of in-person instruction in a school building. Therefore, schools that don't offer in-person instruction should plan on operating under the current funding policy.

I know it is difficult to operate with uncertainty. My hope is this letter may provide a bit more clarity as schools begin to open across Indiana.

Sincerely,



Rodric Bray
President Pro Tempore