

Date

The Honorable Terry E. Branstad
INSIDE ADDRESS

Dear Governor Branstad:

The undersigned represent fourteen educational stakeholder groups in Iowa that have been convening for the past ten years (through the support of the Wallace Foundation's school leadership grant) to improve the quality of preK-12 school leadership. The purpose of this letter is to provide you with our ideas regarding your selection of the next director of the Department of Education.

As you are well aware, our students' performance has flat-lined in the last five years, and the achievement gaps are widening. We must take bold actions if that trend is to be reversed, beginning with the selection of our next Director of the Department of Education.

We believe that the next director must be someone who:

- Has a results-driven vision for high levels of achievement of rigorous learning goals for all preK-20 students and the courage to hold the entire system accountable to that vision
- Can mobilize educators and Iowa's citizens regarding the urgency for change and clearly articulates how we will develop, implement, monitor and sustain an improvement culture that addresses 21st century learning needs in a knowledge economy. (Having had prior success in leading systemic change would be critical)
- Knows how to effectively allocate, manage and secure resources for the benefit of students and their learning, is open to innovative practices that can reallocate resources for better outcomes and integrates what are now separate departments and bureaus within the department into a cohesive system
- Has the capacity to engage parents, community members and other stakeholders across the state and in a variety of contexts e.g.(rural, suburban, and urban, generational, diverse populations) to create a sense of urgency for improvement and a willingness to be frank about what it will take to close the achievement gap and push to higher levels of learning for all.
- Is driven by core values that include a deep commitment to equity for each and every learner, putting students before adults when making decisions, is a life-long learner and student of educational improvement and research, and has the ability to inspire a sense of hope through his or her courageous leadership.
- Is able to influence policy-makers at the state and federal levels, willing to explore where local control is working and where it impedes progress, engage with the business

community, and learn from and apply to Iowa successful efforts to improve learning outcomes for students from other states and countries.

We are deeply committed to restoring Iowa's position as the educational leader in the state and internationally and would welcome an opportunity to visit with you about how this can be done. To that end, we would like to invite you to meet with us at our April 12th meeting in the SAI offices in Clive. As you can see from the attached membership list, we represent constituencies that will both impact and be impacted by educational decisions that must be made if each and every one of our students is to be successful.

We congratulate you on your election and look forward to working with you to ensure that every one of Iowa's learners is college, career, and citizenship ready.

Respectfully,

Dr. Troyce Fisher, director of the Cohesive Leadership (Wallace Foundation) grant on behalf of the Leadership Partnership members:

LIST OF MEMBERS AND AFFILIATIONS