

United States Senate

October 20, 2014

The Honorable Mike Pence
Governor of Indiana
200 W. Washington Street
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Pence,

Over the last two years, I have been encouraged by your commitment to expand pre-kindergarten in the State of Indiana through the Pre-Kindergarten Pilot Program. As you know well, research shows that high-quality early childhood education has long-term positive effects on school readiness and success. These positive effects are greatest for low-income children who are most at risk of starting school unprepared and at an academic disadvantage. As a result, expanding access to pre-kindergarten has been a goal for Hoosier educators, business leaders, and non-profit organizations across our state.

As you know, my office was in communication with a local partner and the state about our intention to support the state's application for a Preschool Development Grant offered by the U.S. Departments of Education and Health and Human Services. The grant would have helped our state build, develop, and expand voluntary, high-quality preschool programs for low- and moderate-income families in high-need communities. Furthermore, Indiana had been designated as a "category one" state and was eligible to receive up to \$80 million in funding.

It is for these reasons, as well as the benefits to Hoosier children and the broad support from local stakeholders, that I am disappointed by the state's choice not to apply for a Preschool Development Grant, and I request a more detailed explanation of the state's decision.

In order to better advocate for the expansion of pre-kindergarten programs in our state, I ask that you provide responses to the following questions:

- What specific federal requirements and conditions tied to the Preschool Development Grant would impede the expansion of pre-kindergarten in Indiana? Have you discussed these concerns with the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education?
- What outstanding policy questions need to be answered by the state's pilot program in order for the state to pursue expansion?
- Given your commitment to pursue the expansion of pre-kindergarten programs, what is the state's plan to fund and implement such an expansion?

Expanding access to high-quality early childhood education is a goal that we both share. I look forward to better understanding your decision to forego this important opportunity to invest in the future of Indiana. I remain committed to working with you, educators, and other local partners to ensure that all Hoosier children have the resources necessary to achieve their long-term potential.

Sincerely,



Joe Donnelly
United States Senator