



STATE OF INDIANA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
State House, Second Floor
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Michael R. Pence
Governor

November 7, 2014

The Honorable Joe Donnelly
United States Senate
Suite 720
Hart Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-1406

Dear Senator Donnelly:

Thank you for your recent inquiry regarding Indiana's pre-kindergarten pilot program and the federal Preschool Development Grant. We worked very hard in the last legislative session to generate bipartisan support for the first state-funded, pre-kindergarten grant program for low-income families in Indiana, which I was pleased to sign into law on March 27, 2014. The legislation created a five-county pilot program targeted to low-income families and designed to involve a wide range of high-quality providers. The pilot will take place in Allen, Jackson, Lake, Marion and Vanderburgh Counties, with \$10 million in state funds combined with matching funds from each county.

I gave my firm commitment to the General Assembly that we would pursue the program as they had designed it. Prior to this legislation, Indiana was the only state in the Midwest and one of nine states in the nation not providing state funds for pre-kindergarten. While I am excited for Indiana to move forward with a pre-kindergarten program, I have been concerned all along that we not try to go too far, too fast. The long-term success of pre-kindergarten in Indiana will be informed by our pilot program, and we have an obligation to get it right and do it the Indiana way, in the manner we designed. Consequently, I decided not to seek federal funding and instead focus on the successful launch of the five-county, pre-kindergarten pilot program. I do not believe it is wise policy to expand our pre-kindergarten pilot before we have a chance to learn from it and determine its effectiveness for our most disadvantaged kids.

Along with local partners around the state, we are on track to begin serving low-income children in the pilot counties early next year. An important part of this pilot is to study the program and the results so we understand what works and what doesn't. Based on these results, we can make informed policy decisions about the future of state-funded pre-kindergarten education in Indiana.

In the next legislative session, my administration will request \$10 million a year to continue the pre-kindergarten pilot past the current fiscal year. I remain committed to expanding pre-kindergarten in Indiana as we learn from the pilot and examine the merits of quality pre-kindergarten education.

I appreciate your support of this important effort that we are starting here in Indiana. I have every confidence that our education experts, local educators and other local partners will be able to develop a program that gets measurable results for the vulnerable kids it is designed to serve using the funds provided by the Indiana General Assembly and local communities in our pilot counties. Thank you for your inquiry and your service to our state and nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael R. Pence". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "M".

Michael R. Pence
Governor of Indiana