

June 29, 2021

Dr. Carmen I. Ayala
State Superintendent
100 W. Randolph, Suite 14-300
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Superintendent Ayala:

This past year has been a challenging time for students, families, educators, and school leaders. We would like to start by thanking you for your leadership during the pandemic in terms of guidance and resources to support the work we do at a local level. There is no doubt that you personally have taken on several challenges in your role, and like local school leaders, many of these challenges had no clear winning outcomes. We hope to continue to work with you for the upcoming school year to ensure the safety of our students and communities while providing a high-quality educational experience.

The purpose of this letter is to request local control in the implementation of COVID-19 safety measures and protocols utilized within each school district. We believe that local boards of education and superintendents are best positioned and capable of planning reasonable and safe approaches to educate the students of our communities. The past 16 months have provided us with ample experience and knowledge to lead locally with your support.

Goal 2 of the Illinois State Board of Education's Strategic Plan is that, "All school districts will receive the resources necessary to create safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments, and will be equipped to meet the unique academic and social needs of each and every student." Strategy 2.1.2 outlines the method in which the Illinois State Board of Education plans to accomplish this goal. ISBE will, "Support district implementation of policy and guidance to promote students' safety and well-being, including non-discrimination and inclusion." We write to you to ask for your support in local district implementation. The guidance provided must not be a one-size-fits-all solution. Illinois is a large, diverse state filled with diverse school districts that educate students with unique needs and different barriers to learning. A plan that may be sensible and effective in one school district may not be sensible and effective in other districts.

With your support, we can make the upcoming school year a memorable one that will help get education back-on-track by recovering learning loss, providing social-emotional support, and keeping our communities safe.

Please consider allowing local control of school districts in terms of COVID-19 safety measures.

Sincerely,

Illinois School Superintendents
c/o Dr. Jeremy Larson and Mrs. Danette Young
300 South Eads Avenue
Paris, IL 61944