Dear Christa McAuliffe Award Selection Committee:

I am extremely pleased that Indiana State University (ISU) has been asked to submit a final proposal for the Christa McAuliffe Award for Exemplary Programs in Teacher Education. The Vigo County School Corporation (VCSC) is honored to add a letter of support to ISU’s final proposal.

As one partner in the Professional Development Partnership (PDS) with ISU, the VCSC can attest to ISU’s positive impact on the learning of program graduates. Professors within the education department work diligently with partner schools to ensure that their pre-service students have quality experiences. For example, when I was assistant principal at the high school, the education professors conducted a yearly “mini-conference” to orient the pre-service students to our corporation and invited practitioners to speak about topics from academics to discipline to community involvement. The education professors taught the courses on-site and worked with classroom teachers and pre-service students in a triad relationship to provide a quality education for the pre-service teacher by examining and reflecting upon current educational practices. Our classroom teachers also benefited from this continual reflection and collaborative inquiry approach to improving teaching and learning.

In terms of the program’s positive impact on the learning of pupils in the P-12 schools, I can attest firsthand. In my role as Dean at Chauncey Rose Middle School, I was fortunate to be a part of the original PDS Steering Committee. During this first year, because of the partnership with ISU, an amazing transformation took place in terms of professional growth. Through the PDS liaison and the Steering Committee support, the building focus became one of curiosity, enthusiasm, and motivation to improve for the benefit of students. Through structured professional development experiences with the PDS liaison and PDS Steering Committee, such as, study seminars, summer retreat, grant writing sessions, and collaborative inquiry projects, teachers became leaders of the learning within the building. Within the last three years, documented growth in mathematics achievement provides evidence of success in the partnership.

As another instance of the program’s positive impact, an ISU student teacher shadowed me for a day in my role as Deputy Superintendent. As we visited schools, it was exciting to hear her “bring her portfolio to life” and explain that she would be confident in her first year of teaching because of ISU’s dedication to preparing students for the standards and accountability expected in our schools. Her portfolio contained much evidence of student learning, but more importantly, she possessed a comprehensive understanding of the application of that learning.

I heartily urge you to consider Indiana State University for the prestigious Christa McAuliffe Award.

Sincerely yours,

Karen Goeller
Deputy Superintendent