



Indiana NAACP State Conference

Protecting and Strengthening Traditional Public Schools

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Key Takeaways & Marching Orders

Why Traditional Public Schools Matter:

- Public schools are community anchors, serving every child regardless of race, income, or ability.
- They provide transportation, meals, counseling, and special education services at scale.
- They are accountable to the public, transparent in their budgets, and rooted in neighborhoods.

Current Challenges:

- Expanded vouchers drain resources from traditional schools.
- Pre-K funding has been slashed, limiting access for low-income families.
- Districts face forced sharing of property-tax dollars with charters.
- Amendment 32 stripped SEL, cultural competency, and trauma-informed training.

Closures and Democracy:

- As Sally Nuamah writes in *Closed for Democracy*, when schools close, families lose more than classrooms—they lose their democratic voice.
- Parents who organize, testify, and even protest are often ignored, left with what she calls 'collective participatory debt.'
- School closures diminish parent power and erode trust in government.

Greatest Concerns with Vouchers & Charters:

- Fixed costs remain in districts, creating a financial death spiral.
- Accountability gaps: private schools lack full civil-rights and transparency obligations.
- Access inequities: many rural families cannot use vouchers.
- Retreat from early learning widens readiness gaps.

What We Propose:

- Restore and expand Pre-K access statewide.
- Protect essential district operations like transportation and safety.
- Fund equity measures for poverty, multilingual learners, and special education.
- Establish a community impact test before school closures or conversions.

Marching Orders for Communities:

Parents & Families:

- Contact school board members about impact tests and no-closure pledges.
- Document and report issues with buses, meals, and services.
- Keep being vigilant to know what is happening with our public school systems.

Students:

- Strive for great attendance and the work hard at school to be engaged and excel.
- Speak up at meetings about what helps you learn.
- Join or start peer study and support groups to share the importance of public schools.

Educators & Staff:

- Track unmet needs (transportation, counseling, caseloads) and report monthly.
- Continue offering grade-level instruction and small-group supports.
- Have high expectations for all students.

Faith & Neighborhood Orgs:

- Partner with schools to provide before/after care, tutoring, meals, and safe walking routes.
- Recruit volunteers for attendance outreach.

NAACP & Advocacy Partners:

- Demand restoration of Pre-K funding.
- Push for one set of rules for all schools receiving public dollars.
- Protect operations funding from charter/property-tax sharing that dilutes the ability of traditional public schools to meet the needs of all students.
- Reinstate training in SEL, cultural competency, and trauma-informed practice.

Closing Thought:

“When you dismantle a public school, you don’t just close a building—you close a hub of democracy, connection, and belonging.”

— NAACP Indiana State Conference