

December 5, 2022

To: Wayne County Board of Education Members

Re: Notice of Intent to Retire as Superintendent

Please accept this letter as notice of my intent to retire as Superintendent of Wayne County Public Schools, effective March 31, 2023.

I initially accepted the role on an interim basis in late December of 2020, and was later honored to be chosen for the permanent role in July of 2021. I accepted this role with three critical goals in mind, all of which were discussed during the interview process.

First, I wanted to oversee the district's fiscal recovery as we worked to repay \$5 million in debt and rebuild a depleted fund balance. Since my appointment, we have retooled and retrained around available resources, setting a standard of "living within our means." We have advocated for and received new revenues, including state construction grant funds for a new Fremont Elementary School and a significant recurring local appropriation specifically for the Wayne School of Technical Arts. Most importantly, we have worked to handle our finances publicly, and with great transparency, in a concerted effort to regain the public's trust in this area. In the end, we have repaid the \$5 million debt in its entirety, and we have quickly rebuilt the district's fund balance to a healthy level, all in just over two years.

Second, I wanted to be part of the district's efforts toward academic recovery. Like others across the state and nation, and around the world, our students lost ground during the pandemic simply because routine educational services were interrupted. We have worked to use ESSER funds to give our teachers the tools they need to be successful, and data from the 2021-2022 school year show that our academic recovery is well underway.

Finally, I wanted to implement innovative programs despite the financial and academic challenges our schools were facing when I began. Since my appointment we have:

- Planned for and opened the Wayne School of Technical Arts, a one-of-a-kind opportunity for military-connected and civilian children in Wayne County;
- Developed deeper partnerships with Wayne Community College and the University of Mount Olive in order to provide a wider variety of options for our students after high school;

- Deepened productive relationships with our local Chamber of Commerce, the Partnership for Children of Wayne County, United Way of Wayne County, and Communities Supporting Schools of Wayne County; and,
- Broken ground on a new Fremont Elementary School that will, upon completion, replace an outdated facility with a modern, student-centered space designed to ease overcrowding in Northern Wayne County. This is the first major step toward elementary school realignment, where classroom space is a major issue.

In short, I believe the three priorities I discussed with the Board in the spring of 2021 have been addressed well. I further believe that the district is now poised for future success having come out from under the restrictive challenges we faced just two short years ago. This progress would not have been possible without a supportive Board, a committed and skilled Leadership Team, talented district and school leaders, and over 2,000 dedicated staff members who come to work each day in the service of children – for all of these, I am truly grateful.

Please accept my sincere appreciation for the opportunities provided to me over my twenty years of service to Wayne County Public Schools. I will gladly offer any and all assistance to the Board in transitioning to new leadership.

Respectfully,



David A. Lewis, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Cc: WCPS Leadership Team
Richard Schwartz, Board Attorney