



Barnes: My Education Wish List

By Educator Barnes – December 16, 2020

What can I say? 2020 has been quite a ride. I know we all want to leave this ride and as it been said, “throw the year away.” Before that happens, it is important to think about the year through the lens of education. As we roll into 2021, here are my wishes for education.

1. Ensure all students have internet.

The internet is an essential tool. If parents cannot afford the internet, this should be covered by school districts. This means the legislature needs to allocate resources to make this happen. Those resources should include building the infrastructure in rural areas to make sure

rural students have access, and there should be funding to cover the cost if a student's family can't afford the internet. Earlier this week, the Indianapolis Mayor's office announced the Marion County Dedicated Network Pilot. At least the city is taking a step in the right direction.

2. Maintain one-to-one technology in all schools.

Students should have already had this. It should not have taken a pandemic to make this happen. Unfortunately, in some districts across the country, students still do not have devices provided by the school. Devices are the new textbooks; they are essential. How do we expect students to be global citizens if we are not giving them access to technology?

3. Teach typing and technology skills.

Students need more training on using technology appropriately and effectively. Students can get more work done if they are not peck typing and are actually typing properly. Students can finish work more efficiently if they had a better understanding of how to use the tools they are using.

4. Listen to students.

The people who get left out of the education conversation the most are the students. They are the first ones impacted by most decisions and many times they are never consulted and asked for input.

5. Increase community support and involvement.

I felt an increase in interest in the school board races during the 2020 election. The energy can't stop at the polls. School board members must be held accountable. Community members must pay attention to what is happening at the school board meetings and what is happening at the schools close to their homes. I don't think there is a school leader that would turn away help from community members.

6. Increase school employee compensation.

Everyone who works in education deserves more compensation. Right now, there has been a focus on teacher compensation. I agree this is important; however, working alongside teachers are a strong support staff and school administrators. No one in education should

have to drive for Uber, work in department stores during the holidays, or pick up any side job because they cannot afford to live on the salary they were given. Earlier this week, the Next Level Teacher Compensation Commission released its report that includes 37 strategies to improve teacher compensation. I hope in 2021 we can move from recommending strategies to actually implementing the strategies to improve teacher compensation.

7. Show that Black lives matter in school.

Social justice summer guilt tripped some educators into performative actions to appear they believed that Black lives matter in school. Unfortunately, as 2020 continued, it was clear it was all just an act. Low expectations of Black students coupled with some teachers not having the desire to learn and grow so Black students could learn, showed the true thoughts these educators had. My Black sons matter. Their academic achievement matters, and I want all educators putting in the work so Black excellence is the norm and not the exception.

This list is just a start. What would be on your list?

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