



# Education and Student Support

Legislative democrats have failed to act in the best interest of our school children over the course of the pandemic and have left the governor free to impose restrictive measures which have caused irreparable harm to many of our youth. For more than two school years, children have been subject to failed online curriculums, persistent masking requirements, and constantly changing guidelines governing quarantining and interscholastic sports. Meanwhile, attempts to determine the prevalence of COVID spread among students has resulted in precious little information or satisfactory answers from our state agencies. The harm inflicted on our students is reflected not only in lower test scores, but also in reported increases in behavioral and mental health problems and increased absenteeism, especially in our urban communities. The American Academy of Pediatrics has declared a national emergency regarding children's mental health. Hospital emergency departments are seeing high volumes of children with behavioral health needs which has placed an untenable burden on behavioral health services.

## Preserving Education

- Permit access to an alternative online k-12 school limited to children who are unable to attend school in-person.
- Provide each caucus leader with an appointment to the State Board of Education which is currently made up of 14 gubernatorial appointed members. Leadership appointments would balance the board to ensure that the interests of our districts are represented when developing education policies.



## Student Mental Health

- Provide more mobile units dedicated to help schools with mental crisis intervention services. Reports indicate that behavioral and mental health problems among students are on the rise and additional mobile units could be readily deployed to assist when needed.
- Protect children from the potential harmful effects that social media has on their mental health by requiring social networks to receive parental consent prior to activating an account of a child under 16 years of age.

## Tax Relief

- Require middle school guidance counselors to discuss with students the potential benefits of attending vocational schools and agriscience programs.
- Reserve a portion of the Roberta Willis Scholarship fund for students interested in attending post-secondary vocational schools.

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