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To: Haley, Nikki
Cc:
Subject: Technology opens doors at Indianapolis district

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An Indianapolis school district has turned around graduation rates thanks in part to a former biology teacher-turned-tech specialist. Pete Just, of the Metropolitan School District in Wayne Township, introduced new technology-enhancing learning methods to the district. He said the district has changed the cell phone policy to allow students to bring their own devices, and rolled out a new learning management system and Chromebook initiative. [In our profile <http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=a5c1b4eac7&e=d22ace373d>](http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=a5c1b4eac7&e=d22ace373d), Just said technology improved his life as a teacher. Now he sees it advancing student learning: district graduation rates climbed from 67 percent to 94 percent over the last nine years.

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Danny Harris, chief information officer of the Department of Education, was grilled from both sides of the aisle last week by the House Committee on Oversight and Government for [security loopholes <http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=774bc9046d&e=d22ace373d>](http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=a7fce28c5d&e=d22ace373d) in the agency's IT systems. Harris was also on the hot seat defending the department's progress in managing its IT investments, saying the the agency should have received a 'C' grade instead of an 'F.' It received the failing grade on a [governmentwide IT report card <http://statescoop.us7.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=](http://statescoop.us7.list-manage1.com/track/click?u=)

[2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=1b100f6693&e=d22ace373d](http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=1b100f6693&e=d22ace373d)> which centered around benchmarks set in last year's Federal IT Acquisition Reform Act aimed at improving IT accountability.

Though millions more students have access to broadband in schools than they did a decade ago, 23 percent of districts still do not meet the minimum broadband requirements set by the Federal Communications Commission, [according to a new report <http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=65922b5e95&e=d22ace373d>](http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=65922b5e95&e=d22ace373d) by EducationSuperHighway. About 21 million students across the country do not have 100 kilobits per second transmission speed per student, which is considered adequate connectivity for digital learning. The report cites three main factors: a lack of access to fiber, affordability and limited school budgets.

This is sure to produce more students interested in agriculture: Discovery Education and the U.S. Farmers and Ranchers Alliance have collaborated on a [new virtual portal and video <http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=0fc5120a95&e=d22ace373d>](http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=0fc5120a95&e=d22ace373d) about farming. Specifically, it teaches students about the science, entrepreneurship and sustainability lessons behind farming, and why it's important to support agriculture even in the 21st century. The film can be downloaded at [DiscoveringFarmland.com <http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=4cff3c967e&e=d22ace373d>](http://statescoop.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=2ccc01e3bfaef269042232521&id=4cff3c967e&e=d22ace373d) and is available on Netflix, Walmart.com, and other select retail outlets and digital download platforms.

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