



STATE OF IOWA

TERRY E. BRANSTAD, GOVERNOR
KIM REYNOLDS, LT. GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RYAN M. WISE, DIRECTOR

March 1, 2016

Dear Superintendents:

Initial planning for implementation of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2017-2018 has begun, and the Iowa Department of Education is committed to crafting the best plan possible for the state.

I'm very excited about the possibilities this opportunity holds for our schools and believe the new law restores the proper balance between the role of states and the federal government in federal education policy. In particular, we have the opportunity to restructure Iowa's state accountability system.

The Department will have approximately 18 months to write and submit our state plan to implement the provisions included in ESSA. We have organized internally to begin work on this new plan, and I want to assure you that we will provide regular opportunities for communication, input and advice along the way.

While the development of a new state plan is critical, there are also some short-term decisions the Department must make in the interim transition time. One decision we have made is that Iowa school districts will not be required to set aside Title I funding for school choice or supplemental education services (SES) during the 2016-2017 school year. ESSA allows Iowa to make this choice, but we must develop and implement a transition plan to provide alternative supports in 2016-2017 for SES-eligible students in schools with the greatest need (schools with large numbers or percentages of SES-eligible students, or as defined in the state's transition plan).

Accordingly, the Department has submitted to the U.S. Department of Education a set of assurances that include the following:

1. The Iowa Department of Education will engage in timely and meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders, including parents, local educational agencies (LEAs), teachers, and principals, when developing the transition plan;
2. The Iowa Department of Education will publicly post its transition plan no later than Friday, May 6, 2016, in the manner in which the state customarily provides such information to the public (including posting its transition plan on its website);
3. The Iowa Department of Education will explain in the transition plan how it will provide or ensure that LEAs provide SES-eligible students in schools with the greatest need with alternative support and improvement activities intended to improve student outcomes, consistent with allowable uses of Title I funds and all applicable fiscal requirements; and

Grimes State Office Building - 400 E 14th St - Des Moines IA 50319-0146

PHONE (515) 281-5294 FAX (515) 242-5988

www.educateiowa.gov

Championing Excellence for all Iowa Students through Leadership and Service

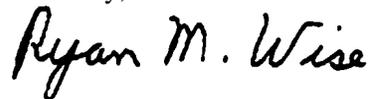
4. Consistent with the Elementary and Secondary Education Act section 1116(b)(13), the Iowa Department of Education will require LEAs to permit a student who previously transferred to another public school under the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 to remain in that school until the child has completed the highest grade in that school.

The Department is working on the technical assistance that we will provide to districts as we move into this transition period. We will disseminate that guidance as quickly as possible.

Information and resources will be posted on an ongoing basis to our website at the following link:
<https://www.educateiowa.gov/pk-12/every-student-succeeds-act>

As always, thank you for all of the work you and your staff are doing on behalf of Iowa's children.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ryan M. Wise". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Ryan M. Wise, Ed.L.D.
Director