Fields of Opportunities

STATE OF IOWA

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

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
RYAN M. WISE, DIRECTOR

April 4, 2016

Dear Superintendents:

As many of you are aware, the Iowa Department of Education (Department) continues to work on transition planning as the state moves from regulations under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) to the newly authorized Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) in 2017-2018. The Department recently notified stakeholders of its intent to implement a transition plan during the 2016-2017 school year related to the issues of Title I Supplemental Educational Services (SES) and School Choice. Another set of issues involved in this transition include decisions around the continuation of Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) monitoring and the designation of individual schools as schools in need of assistance (SINA) or the designation of school districts as districts in need of assistance (DINA).

The Department will elect to freeze the AYP status of all districts and schools in the state for the 2016-2017 school year. This effectively gives each district and school the same AYP status for the 2016-2017 school year that the district or school had during the 2015-2016 school year. This also means that any designation of district or school in need of assistance (DINA/SINA) because of AYP status will remain the same as it was in 2015-2016.

Designations of district or school in need of assistance (DINA/SINA) come with requirements to write and enact improvement plans, implement corrective actions, or restructure. With AYP status frozen, districts and schools will continue the implementation of the same plans or actions as were developed in 2015-2016. Districts and schools will be able to amend their plans if they choose. Districts and schools are not required to amend their plans. In addition, a school that has restructured is not required to restructure again. Additional information on this process to continue to implement or update DINA/SINA plans is forthcoming.

The SINA and DINA plans submitted in 2015-2016 will be available to view in C-Plan so districts and schools can see their plan and continue to implement these actions. If districts would like to make changes to their plans, they may do so within the Title I application for the 2016-2017 school year. Please remember that SINA budgets and plans must align.

There will be a webinar on April 14 from 8:00 – 9:30 a.m. held by Amy Williamson, Bureau Chief for School Improvement, and Geri McMahon, Administrative Consultant for Title I, to provide basic information on this transition and answer any questions. You

may also send any questions on AYP, DINA/SINA, or the transition to ESSA to us at essa@iowa.gov.

I look forward to working with all of you to make this a successful transition to the new ESSA. We will continue to post the latest information and resources to the Department's website at: 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,

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