



March 21, 2017

Council of Chief State School Officers  
One Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700  
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Council of Chief State School Officers:

As organizations representing state and local stakeholders designated by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) for consultation in the development of consolidated state plans, we write to ensure that they are fully engaged in this process and that their priorities are included as a central feature of each state's plan.

We remain concerned and disappointed that the U.S. Department of Education removed elements of stakeholder engagement from the template for ESSA plans they have asked states to submit. This action disregards Section 1111(a)(1)(A) of ESSA, which requires state education agencies to meaningfully consult a wide variety of stakeholders that are vital to the implementation and success of the law.

The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) positioned themselves at the center of the process to determine components that should be included in ESSA state plans. Since the Department has relinquished responsibility to work with states on this process to CCSSO, we believe the organization is obligated to make certain that every chief state school officer demonstrates clearly and explicitly in each state plan how stakeholders were involved in its development, and how they will continue this engagement during implementation, review, and future revisions.

Last year, CCSSO partnered with us to [guide stakeholder engagement](#) in the states, and we need state plans to build on that work. The Department's omission of stakeholder engagement as a priority for state plans should not be a disincentive nor diminish the importance for state education agencies to ensure and document that the appropriate consultation required by the law has taken place.

Congress intended for ESSA state plans to reflect the vision of individuals with the expertise and firsthand knowledge of working with, and on behalf of, students every day through the consultative process. We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the CCSSO Board of Directors to inform the strategies that the organization is using to ensure that state educational agencies are engaging stakeholders effectively in the development of state plans.

We hope that CCSSO will monitor their members closely to ensure they uphold the law's requirement for meaningful consultation with our members. The promise of ESSA will ultimately not become a reality without it.

Sincerely,

AASA: The Superintendents Association  
American Federation of Teachers  
National Association of Elementary School Principals  
National Association of Secondary School Principals  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Conference of State Legislatures  
National Education Association  
National Governors Association  
National Parent Teacher Association  
National School Boards Association  
National Association of School Psychologists

Cc:

Senator Lamar Alexander, State of Tennessee  
Senator Patty Murray, State of Washington  
Representative Virginia Foxx, State of North Carolina  
Representative Bobby Scott, State of Virginia