



COLORADO
Department of Education
Commissioner of Education

201 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203-1799

May 9, 2018

Dear Superintendents and BOCES Directors,

I hope you are doing well as the school year begins to come to a close! I know this is a busy time, but it must also be so gratifying to attend graduations and see the fruits of your work. Thank you for all your hard work this year, and every year.

You have probably heard the news that Colorado's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan has been approved by the U.S. Department of Education. We are pleased that we are able to move our attention to implementing the state's plan in support of you, your schools, and the students and families you serve.

I wanted to provide you with some general information about what our ESSA plan means for Colorado schools and districts.

- Approval of our state plan ensures that ESSA funding will continue to flow to Colorado and its school districts. School districts and BOCES access the majority of ESSA funds through the consolidated application. Applications are due on June 30, 2018. The consolidated application, supporting materials, and information about training and assistance in completing the application can be found here:
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/consapp/trainctr>.
- CDE has created the ESSA Application for School Improvement (EASI), a one-stop process for districts with schools identified for support based on student performance, including Priority Improvement or Turnaround schools and those identified under ESSA for Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement. The single application will help districts access services and funding (both state and federal) specifically tailored to the unique needs of each identified school.

I also wanted to note that the statements in the media about us returning to two accountability systems may create the wrong impression. Colorado will not be returning to the era of two accountability systems as we had under No Child Left Behind. Our state accountability system will continue to be our primary means for letting parents and communities know how their schools are doing. Because of added priorities of the new federal law, it is likely that some additional schools will be identified through the Every Students Succeed Act for extra support and improvement based on the performance of individual groups of students and overall low graduation rates. Thankfully, the federal law provides funding to help support these schools in making improvements for students. We will work hard to help explain why they are identified for extra support and improvement.

If you have any questions about Colorado's ESSA plan, please reach out to me or Pat Chapman, executive director of our Federal Programs Unit at 303-866-6780 or chapman_p@cde.state.co.us.



Thank you for all you do! As I reflect back on our work together over the last school year, I want you to know how much I appreciate your partnership, your ideas, and your incredible dedication to students as we work collectively to ensure that all students have the opportunity to receive a quality education that prepares them for careers and college.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katy Anthes". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Katy Anthes, Ph.D.
Commissioner

