



EMBARGOED UNTIL 6 A.M. FEBRUARY 10, 2016

February 10, 2016



John B. King, Jr.
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20202



Dear Acting Secretary King:



On behalf of states, school districts, educators and parents, we write to express our strong, shared commitment to making the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) a law that puts students first. We invite you to work with us to ensure that communities determine the best methods of educating our nation's children.



Although our organizations do not always agree, we are unified in our belief that ESSA is a historic opportunity to make a world-class 21st century education system. We are dedicated to working together at the national level to facilitate partnership among our members in states and districts to guarantee the success of this new law.



ESSA replaces a top-down accountability and testing regime with an inclusive system based on collaborative state and local innovation. For this vision to become a reality, we must work together to closely honor congressional intent. ESSA is clear: Education decision making now rests with states and districts, and the federal role is to support and inform those decisions.



In the coming months, our coalition – the State and Local ESSA Implementation Network – will:

- Work together to ensure a timely, fair transition to ESSA;
- Coordinate ESSA implementation by governors, state superintendents, school boards, state legislators, local superintendents, educators and parents;
- Promote state, local and school decision-making during implementation; and
- Collaborate with a broader group of education stakeholders to provide guidance to the federal government on key implementation issues.



In ESSA, Congress recognizes states and schools as well-suited to provide a high-quality education to every child, regardless of their background. We have long prioritized lifting up those students who need help the most and our members stand ready to continue this work.



Our organizations look forward to a cooperative, collaborative and productive relationship with you and your staff throughout the implementation process.

Sincerely,

Scott D. Pattison, Executive Director/CEO
National Governors Association

William T. Pound, Executive Director
National Conference of State Legislatures





Kristen J. Amundson, Executive Director
National Association of State Boards of
Education

Daniel A. Domenech, Executive Director
AASA: The School Superintendents
Association

JoAnn D. Bartoletti, Executive Director
National Association of Secondary
School Principals

Lily Eskelsen Garcia, President
National Education Association

Thomas J. Gentzel, Executive Director
National School Boards Association

Gail Connelly, Executive Director
National Association of Elementary
School Principals

Randi Weingarten, President
American Federation of Teachers

Laura M. Bay, President
National PTA