

August 24, 2017

Dear Acting Assistant Secretary Botel,

Thank you for the feedback on Colorado's ESSA State Plan. We appreciate the specific, statutory feedback that you outlined in the table from the U.S. Department of Education. In addition, the feedback from the peer reviewers is helpful as we think about how to strengthen our ESSA plan to leverage the greatest impacts for student performance.

As you know, some of the requested changes require us to consult with our State Board of Education regarding policy direction. Because our board has a strong commitment to Colorado's parental opt-out rights, it will need to carefully consider how best to address your concerns without designing a system that will be perceived by parents and educators as punitive. We are optimistic that the various interests here can be addressed in a manner that complies with ESSA and is in the best interest of Colorado students, parents, and educators. As you know, plan development was a complex deliberative process, and any substantial revisions will require similar comprehensive discussions with the board and with stakeholders.

Our board procedures outline a process where decision items are brought to the board for information in the first month and action in the second month. As such, CDE plans to bring the noted policy points and potential options to the board at their September 13th and 14th meeting, followed up with a board vote at the October 11th and 12th meeting. After direction from the State Board of Education, CDE will be able to re-submit our ESSA State Plan for review.

Thus, we would like to acknowledge that we will not submit a revised state plan to the U.S. Department of Education by August 24th. We are hopeful that we can submit a revised plan by October 23rd, which is exactly sixty days after the requested deadline. We understand that this will result in a reasonable, corresponding extension of your own 120-day review deadline under Section 1111 (i.e., until November 6, 2017). We appreciate the USDoe's flexibility with these timelines so that we can work through these different policies and priorities.

Sincerely,



Katy Anthes, Ph.D.  
Commissioner

