

March 21, 2017

Governor \_\_\_\_\_ OR Education OR Ways and Means Committee Chairs \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State House  
City, State, and Zip

Dear Governor OR Committee Chairs \_\_\_\_\_:

We appreciate that the U.S. Department of Education (USED) has given states flexibility in their application for Title I funds in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) so they can make choices that best suit the needs of their citizens. To take advantage of this flexibility, we ask you to take the actions listed below to ensure that the many concerns of parents and teachers in our state are fully and satisfactorily addressed in a Supplemental Plan to the State Plan for K-12 education that our own department of education has developed and intends to submit to USED. What we are requesting is similar to what Ohio's Department of Public Instruction is doing with stakeholder groups in Ohio; it has already postponed submission of its State Plan until September, as allowed by USED.

We ask the *governor OR committee chairs* to convene a large group of current classroom teachers and parents of current school children from across the state to make recommendations on a range of education issues such as the length and timing during the school year of federal and state-required tests, whether social-emotional learning should be assessed on these required tests, how test information should be reported to parents and teachers, parents' right to refuse the test, and what data should be collected on students without parental permission. This group, to be selected by the governor or legislative committee chairs, needs to develop a Supplemental Plan that suggests how local public schools should be held accountable to local/state taxpayers perhaps using the same categories that are in the state's final plan. We envision a planning process, like Ohio's, that would not be limited by the narrow focus of federal regulations.

To provide the basis for this work, *the governor OR committee chairs* should:

- (1) Postpone submission of the State Plan to USED until September, as allowed by USED;
- (2) If it has not already done so, ask the state department of education to post the final version of the State Plan for public comment and make available all the signed individual reviewer comments online and/or in writing so the public can see how many parents and teachers replied and who replied.
- (3) Send the final version of the State Plan and the Supplemental Plan to the appropriate legislative committees for *working out* fiscal implications of the State plan and for approval of the Supplemental Plan; and
- (4) Ask our department of education to post online the Supplemental Plan developed by the large group of parents and teachers in the state, and ask state residents to send in comments online.

These actions would enable our state to demonstrate that it sought and obtained "meaningful" consultations with its teachers and parents, as required by ESSA. The Supplemental Plan should be voted on by the state legislature and approved by the governor before its submission to USED by the state legislature or governor.

Sincerely,  
Name (and affiliation if appropriate)