

May 17, 2018

Christopher Ruskowski
Secretary of Education
New Mexico Public Education Department
300 Don Gaspar Avenue
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Secretary Ruskowski & NMPED Team,

I am writing to applaud you and your team at the New Mexico Public Education Department as well as the teachers, school leaders, parents, students and many others across your state who have been hard at work implementing New Mexico's state plan aligned with the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Since the state submitted its ESSA plan in 2017, you have not lost momentum. This plan was built with the input and feedback of New Mexicans across your state – through town halls and community meetings, surveys and phone calls, revisions and reviews. Now, it is becoming a reality to the benefit of each and every child across your state.

This plan builds on the progress New Mexico has been making to create more equitable education opportunities for all students. The Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) has visited New Mexico several times in recent years to highlight leading for equity initiatives like Principals Pursuing Excellence and Teachers Pursuing Excellence as well as efforts to recruit and retain a diverse educator workforce, and share these promising practices with other states. These are initiatives that have demonstrated success in improving struggling schools, with more students now attending A or B schools as a result.

Now, through the state's ESSA plan, New Mexico is continuing a similar approach to build on this success and address schools identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) as well as those schools identified for More Rigorous Interventions (MRI). While most states are just beginning to implement their federally approved ESSA plans this spring, New Mexico has moved more urgently, already announcing the identification of these schools and making significant resources available for them to utilize. New Mexico, under your leadership, has taken the next step, the all-important step, to begin supporting these schools, already investing nearly \$20 million in additional funding to support struggling schools over the next three years. You have called upon local districts to develop and approve plans for schools identified for More Rigorous Interventions, given them opportunities to improve their approach, and asked for those schools to go back and rethink how they can better serve students in the long term. This is not easy work—but it is the responsibility of the state chief and the state education agency.

In these ways and many others, from expanding Pre-K to growing summer learning programs, the New Mexico Public Education Department is continuing to serve as a leader in improving schools for all students. Please continue to let CCSSO know how we can support you in these efforts, and we will continue to share your leading-edge work with our members around the country.

Sincerely,



Carissa Moffat Miller
Executive Director
Council of Chief State School Officers