



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

April 20, 2018

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

Dear Secretary Ruszkowski:

Thank you for your letter and for your support of my message to the Council of Chief State School Officers in March. State education leaders must not miss the opportunity provided by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to rethink education in their community. I was heartened to see that New Mexico's state plan intends to do what is best for kids, not simply maintain the status quo or comply with the bare minimum required by law.

This is an important moment as we shift from planning to the implementation of ESSA. While the extensive efforts that went into creating these plans are commendable, the true test will be how well these plans are implemented and the results for individual students.

In your state plan, you describe the necessity of taking immediate action to help support the students and families that are trapped in failing schools. I trust that your plan, informed by extensive engagement of local stakeholders, is the right strategy for New Mexico. My responsibility as the Secretary of Education is to ensure that every state implements its approved plan with fidelity and in accordance with the law.

I understand that enacting real change is difficult and can even be unpopular. I applaud you for staying true to your state plan and remaining focused on what you believe will best help individual students. No child should be trapped in a school that is not meeting his or her needs.

Please let me know how I or anyone at the Department can be of service in the future. Thank you for your commitment to students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy DeVos". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Betsy DeVos