



# LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

March 28, 2017

Mr. Scott Smith, Superintendent  
Bossier Parish School Board  
P.O. Box 2000  
Benton, LA 71006-2000

Dear Superintendent Smith:

Thank you for your letter regarding the submission of Louisiana's ESSA state plan to the U.S. Department of Education for review and approval.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) has been working with stakeholders to develop Louisiana's plan for well over a year and has held dozens of meetings across the state with hundreds of educators, school leaders, parents, advocates, business and industry leaders, postsecondary education representatives, policymakers, and formal advisory councils, including but not limited to meetings of the Superintendents Advisory Council, superintendent task force meetings, and the Accountability Commission. Detailed information on ESSA stakeholder consultation can be found at [www.louisianabelieves.com/essa](http://www.louisianabelieves.com/essa)

Throughout these many conversations, the LDE has indicated its intent to submit Louisiana's state plan for federal review and approval by the beginning of the 2017-2018 school year in order to provide educators with clarity about expectations and how they will be measured.

In 2013, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education [announced](#) its intent to gradually shift to "Mastery" as the state's performance expectation for A-rated schools in Louisiana. This goal was codified in Bulletin 111 and has been discussed extensively in numerous stakeholder meetings since that time. It is thus a priority reflected in the draft ESSA state plan.

Also in 2013, through rules promulgated in Bulletin 111, Section 303, BESE provided for a gradual transition to higher standards and a "two-year baseline" by holding steady the distribution of school letter grades for the 2013-2014 and 2014-2015 school year based on the 2012-2013 distribution. BESE then added the 2015-2016 school year to that transition period. Last spring, through Act 498 of the 2016 Regular Session, the 2016-2017 school year was added to this transition. The release of school letter grades this fall will represent the fourth consecutive year that the Department of Education has held constant the distribution of school letter grades in order to provide for what began as a two-year baseline.

Louisiana will continue to raise expectations for teaching and learning through 2025 in order to provide students with an education that is on par with their peers nationally. Throughout that time, it is critical that parents, educators, and the public will be provided accurate, timely

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information about school performance in order to support academic growth and to evaluate the extent to which our state is meeting its goals.

On [September 28, 2016](#) and again on [February 6, 2017](#), the LDE released draft frameworks that illustrate the total impact of the state's draft ESSA state plan on local school systems. The frameworks, which contain both summary information and detailed appendices, explain how Louisiana and its school systems will meet the requirements of ESSA address while addressing Louisiana's main challenges:

1. Fundamental expectations for students and graduates
2. Deep struggles for historically disadvantaged students
3. Fair access to experiences essential for success in school and beyond
4. A strong educator profession
5. Persistently struggling schools

The total impact of the proposed plan, including a complete overview of accountability implications, has also been discussed at recent regional accountability briefings for superintendents and district leadership. Refer to slides 34-44 of the [presentation](#) used in these meetings.

Page 21 of the state's draft framework and page 32 of the [draft state plan](#) presents the timeline by which the LDE will work collaboratively with practitioners, content experts, and other stakeholders to develop and implement the Interests and Opportunities component that meets the ESSA requirement for having a school quality/student success indicator in the state accountability system. This will allow for collection and review of necessary data, piloting the measurements to ensure validity, and assisting school systems in preparing for the new measurement before results become part of the school performance score.

You also inquired about federal title funding. Information about the Direct Student Services option to provide courses and supports to students where they are currently unavailable can be found on page 12 and Appendix C of the second draft framework and page 69 of the draft state plan. The total amount of Title I funds allocated to local school systems remains largely the same from No Child Left Behind to ESSA. As required in ESSA, 100 percent of funds used for Direct Student Services will be awarded to geographically diverse local school systems, with priority given to districts with schools identified as needing comprehensive support.

My staff and I will continue to work diligently with superintendents and other stakeholders to implement a strong plan for the benefit of Louisiana's students.

Sincerely,



John White  
State Superintendent of Education

cc: Mr. Tony Davis, BESE Member, District 4

## **ESSA Stakeholder Meetings\***

### **2016 Regional ESSA Meetings:**

- June 14, 2016 (Statewide School System Leaders and Educator Associations, Baton Rouge)
- July 26, 2016 (Lafayette)
- July 26, 2016 (Lafayette)
- July 27, 2016 (Pineville)
- July 27, 2016 (Shreveport)
- July 28, 2016 (Monroe)
- July 29, 2016 (Baton Rouge)
- August 1, 2016 (Houma)
- August 2, 2016 (Mandeville)
- August 2, 2016 (New Orleans)
- November 1, 2016 (Bossier)
- November 4, 2016 (New Orleans)
- November 7, 2016 (Opelousas)

### **Accountability Commission Meetings:**

- January 29, 2016
- June 27, 2016
- September 12, 2016
- October 17, 2016
- November 1, 2016
- December 5, 2016
- January 9, 2017
- February 8, 2017
- February 17, 2017

### **Superintendents' Advisory Council:**

- February 18, 2016
- May 26, 2016
- July 21, 2016
- September 21, 2016
- November 2, 2016
- February 16, 2017

### **Superintendents' Task Force:**

- February 18, 2016
- September 21, 2016

- November 2, 2016

**Regional ESSA Accountability Briefings with Superintendents and Principals:**

- March 6, 2017 (Hammond)
- March 8, 2017 (Crowley)
- March 13, 2017 (Bossier City)
- March 20, 2017 (Monroe)
- March 21, 2017 (Gonzales)

**School System Supervisor Collaboration Meetings:**

- January 31, 2017 (Harvey)
- February 2, 2017 (Baton Rouge)
- February 7, 2017 (Ruston)
- February 9, 2017 (Lafayette)

\*This above listing is not an exhaustive list of stakeholder meetings regarding the development of Louisiana's draft ESSA state plan. Additional meetings are listed at [www.louisianabelieves.com/essa](http://www.louisianabelieves.com/essa), and the LDE has held numerous individual meetings with school system leaders and other stakeholders as this plan has been developed.



P.O. Box 2000, Benton, Louisiana 71006-2000 / Telephone (318) 549-5000 / FAX (318) 549-5044 / www.bossierschools.org

**Scott Smith**  
Superintendent

March 20, 2017

**Billie Jo Brotherton**  
662 Fairview Point Road  
Elm Grove, LA 71051  
District 1

**Brad L. Bockhaus**  
2529 Bloomfield  
Haughton, LA 71037  
District 2

**Frank Kelly**  
4041 Woodway Drive  
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District 3

**William "Bill" Lott**  
3441 Hwy 160  
Benton, LA 71006  
District 4

**Michael S. Mosura II**  
2400 Churchill Drive  
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District 5

**Glenwood L. "Glen" Bullard**  
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District 6

**J. W. Slack**  
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District 7

**Kenneth M. Wiggins**  
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District 9

**Sandra "Samm" Darby**  
1212 Gibson Circle  
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District 10

**Shane Cheatham**  
1923 Rossie Lee Drive  
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District 11

**Dennis Bamburg, Jr.**  
206 Eagle Ridge Drive  
Haughton, LA 71037  
District 12

Superintendent John White  
Louisiana Department of Education  
PO Box 94064  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802

Dear Superintendent White:

After hosting dozens of "listening tours" throughout the state to inform parents, educators and community stakeholders about the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), and solicit feedback, you are well aware that policy of this magnitude takes thoughtful consideration to craft.

That is why I am asking for your consideration to submit Louisiana's consolidated plans to the U.S. Department of Education in September 2017, rather than next month.


At the last local Superintendents' meeting, the "Interests and Opportunities" component of ESSA still seemed an ambiguous component to me, and I feel there needs to be more clarity on this issue before it is signed, sealed and delivered.

Bossier Schools, alone, stands to lose approximately \$160,000 with the 3% cut in Title I funding. This will hurl a huge blow to the delivery of quality education to my at-risk students.

One thing I have learned during my 37 years in public education is getting buy-in from stakeholders is critical when it comes to receiving acceptance, and ultimately support, of important education initiatives. This includes the feedback from the LSBA and LASS.

For these reasons among others, I am asking the LDOE wait until September 2017 before submitting the ESSA plan for the State of Louisiana. Let's ensure we get it right for **every** student to succeed.

Sincerely,

  
Scott Smith  
Superintendent

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