



October 27, 2016

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Important changes are coming to Minnesota's education system, and you are invited to share your opinions on the direction it takes. Last December, the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law, replacing outdated No Child Left Behind. The new law includes protections for vulnerable students, and creates tools and opportunities for parents, communities and other advocates to support equity for all students and accountability for schools.

The Minnesota Department of Education must submit a plan outlining how we will put ESSA's requirements into action. This plan will address state testing, ways in which schools and districts are held accountable for educating students, and how the state will support schools that may be struggling. Public feedback is a critical part of developing this plan. In the end, our work is to ensure all students—regardless of background—get the best possible education.

There are many ways you can learn about the new law and share your thoughts with us about the vision for the State Plan. We have information about our state's planning process on our website at <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/ESSA>. There are links to view notes and presentations from various committees that are meeting to discuss technical components of the law in detail. There are even materials that you can use to hold local discussions about our education system under ESSA, which we hope you will share with us.

Earlier this month we held regional meetings in Duluth, Bemidji, Marshall, Rochester and St. Cloud, and next week we will be in Burnsville. Additionally, next Wednesday, November 2 at 6 p.m. we are hosting an online version, where you can learn about ESSA and ask me your questions or provide feedback. No registration is required, just visit <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/ESSA> and select "Join the Stakeholder Meeting."

Later this fall, there will be additional opportunities to discuss the plan as it takes shape, including a survey for parents, educators and community members. I am hoping to have as many parents as possible take the survey, so keep an eye out for that information and more at <http://education.state.mn.us/MDE/ESSA>.

If you have any comments you'd like to share with us, please send us a note at mde.essa@state.mn.us or call us at 651-582-8800. Thank you so much for your dedication to our youngest Minnesotans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brenda Cassellius". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Brenda Cassellius
Commissioner