



EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS  
HONOLULU

DAVID Y. IGE  
GOVERNOR

July 29, 2016

The Honorable John B. King, Jr.  
Secretary, U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary King:

We are writing to provide general comments on the U.S. Department of Education's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM) for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) pertaining to accountability, state plans, and data reporting (Docket ID: ED-2016-OESE-0032). The focus on state autonomy and flexibility in the ESSA is a welcome change from the one-size-fits-all approach under No Child Left Behind. Together with the full support of the members of the State of Hawaii Board of Education, we are concerned that the proposed regulations in the NPRM appear restrictive and not in the spirit of the ESSA with regard to the flexibility afforded to states.

In Hawaii, we have been working toward bringing people together to maximize the possible opportunities we have under the ESSA. On Saturday, July 9, 2016, the Governor's ESSA Task Force hosted an Education Summit with approximately 1,000 people from many backgrounds in attendance. Participants were inspired by being able to contribute to meaningful improvements to the state's education system. However, aspects of the proposed regulations seem to revert back to the one-size-fits-all approach, which may limit the opportunities that have been purported to be available.

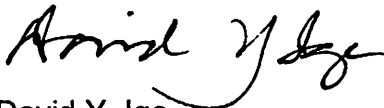
One specific request is that the U.S. Department of Education pay particular consideration to the timeline for releasing final regulations, application deadlines, and review and approval process and timeline. The ESSA is an opportunity for federal initiatives to be perceived as support for school improvement rather than a compliance exercise. To achieve this potential, we need sufficient lead time for planning upon the issuance of the final regulations and for implementation when plans are approved. Hawaii's 2017-2018 school year begins on August 1, 2017, for teachers and August 7, 2017, for students. For us to begin the next school year implementing the ESSA fully as required by law, we need an approved plan no later than July 2017.

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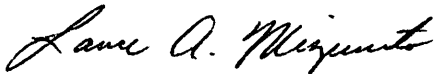
The Hawaii State Department of Education is formally submitting its detailed comments in response to the proposed regulations by the August 1st deadline. We hope that the U.S. Department of Education will carefully consider the implications of the proposed regulations and whether they undo the flexibility that states have been led to believe that they have.

We look forward to working with the U.S. Department of Education to further refine the proposed regulations to ensure that they empower all of our students to achieve their aspirations for college, career, and citizenship.

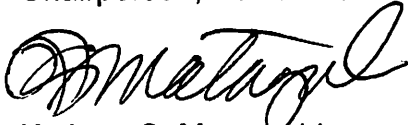
Sincerely,



David Y. Ige  
Governor, State of Hawai'i



Lance A. Mizumoto  
Chairperson, Hawaii State Board of Education



Kathryn S. Matayoshi  
Superintendent, Hawaii State Department of Education

KSM:TOC:SS:la

c: U.S. Senator Brian Schatz  
U.S. Senator Mazie K. Hirono  
U.S. Representative Tulsi Gabbard  
Members of the State of Hawaii Board of Education