Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs
1201 N. 3rd Street, Suite G-219, Baton Rouge, La 70802

March 23, 2017

Transmitted via Email

Superintendent John White and BESE Members:

At their March 21, 2017 meeting, the Governor's Advisory Council on Disability Affairs (GACDA) heard an update on the recommendations from the Governor's Advisory Council on ESSA regarding the submission of Louisiana's Plan. GACDA members voted to submit this correspondence to you as a formal request to delay the submission of Louisiana's ESSA Plan until the September submission date.

Our members believe that a September submission will allow additional time for both BESE and the LDOE to seek, consider, and incorporate more authentic stakeholder input into the Plan. GACDA believes the inclusion of stakeholder input into the Plan is especially critical in those areas most directly affecting students with disabilities: the weight of the growth factor in the accountability formula and the weight and composition of School Quality Indicators. Our Council noted that the four informational meetings on the effect of the ESSA Plan on students with disabilities are only now being held; we recognize the need for school districts, parents, self-advocates, and advocates to study and provide input into the information now being disseminated before a Plan is submitted.

Finally, GACDA is requesting that the LDOE and BESE provide written justification for stakeholder input which is not included in Louisiana's Plan, in a manner which mirrors the process followed by the federal government during every reauthorization of IDEA: the comments to the revised regulations describe stakeholder input received on each section and then provide a justification why the input was not incorporated into the final regulations.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of our request and for your willingness to carefully consider all stakeholder input from educators, administrators, parents, self-advocates, and advocates for our students with disabilities.

Sincerely,

Lynette Fontenot

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Chairperson