



## *League of United Latin American Citizens*

August 8, 2017

Pam Stewart  
Commissioner  
Florida Department of Education  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0400

Dear Commissioner Stewart:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), the oldest and largest Latino civil rights organization, I write to express my concern regarding ongoing reports that Florida is drafting an accountability plan, as required under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), that requests waivers from key provisions aimed at protecting underserved students.

More specifically, LULAC National is concerned that Florida's plan to the Department of Education (ED) requests that it be allowed to skirt subgroup accountability, accountability for English language proficiency, and requirements surrounding providing native language assessments.<sup>i</sup>

In April, LULAC, along with several other civil rights organizations, sent the Department of Education a letter urging that ED ensure rigorous implementation of ESSA, especially key provisions put in place to protect the delivery and access to high quality education for underserved students. As the letter states, *ESSA plans that allow schools to shirk their responsibility to all children, especially groups of children who have been shortchanged for too long, fail to meet the intent of the law and should be rejected.*<sup>ii</sup>

Florida's draft state plan requesting that the Department of Education exempt the state from key federal provisions, including its responsibility regarding native language assessments, would be a clear example of a state attempting to circumvent its responsibility to English learners.

As the Department of Education continues its review of state submitted accountability plans as required in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), LULAC National has requested that ED reject any plans from states that, like Florida, aim to shirk their responsibility to deliver a high quality public education to every child.

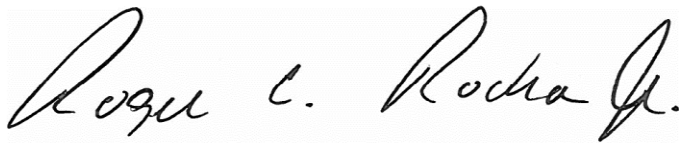
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In addition, LULAC National has requested that ED direct states to submit all public comments submitted on their draft ESSA plans to the department as part of their submission and that these comments be made available to the public to ensure transparency.

The State of Florida has a responsibility to protect and serve the interests and education of all students. The Florida Department of Education should adhere to the letter of the law and ensure that its state plan fully accounts for the success of all students, especially the most vulnerable, underserved students, English learners, students with disabilities, and others.

We have faith that with your leadership the State of Florida will provide the highest quality public education for our students. For more information, or should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Luis Torres, LULAC National Director of Policy, by email at [latorres@lulac.org](mailto:latorres@lulac.org) or by phone at 202-833-6130.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Roger C. Rocha Jr." The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Roger" being the most prominent.

Roger C. Rocha, Jr.  
LULAC National President

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<sup>i</sup> II, D. B. (2017, July 26). Florida to Seek Waiver From Key ESSA Provisions. Retrieved August 02, 2017, from <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2017/07/20/florida-to-seek-waiver-from-key-essa.html?qs=daarel%2Bburnette%2Bii%2B>

<sup>ii</sup> LULAC National letter archive: <http://lulac.org/assets/DeVos-ESSA-State-Plan.pdf>