



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION  
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

March 22, 2021

The Honorable Pedro Pierluisi  
Governor  
Commonwealth of Puerto Rico  
P.O. Box 9020082  
San Juan, PR 00902-0082

Dear Governor Pierluisi:

Thank you for your letter to the U.S. Department of Education (Department) dated March 5, 2021. In your letter, you requested immediate access to Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) funds and Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRSSA) funds.

As we renew our partnership with the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE), I wish to affirm my commitment, and the Department's commitment, to supporting Puerto Rico and PRDE in a collaborative and mutually respectful manner, with the shared objective of benefitting the students of the Commonwealth.

As the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico faces the challenges of the pandemic and continues to recover from the hurricanes and the more recent earthquakes, the Department understands the urgency to access vital Federal education funds to meet the needs of Puerto Rican students who are experiencing compounded trauma. The Department is committed to partnering with and supporting Puerto Rico in the efficient and effective use of Department funds to serve Puerto Rico's students, including to safely reopen schools and maximize in-person instructional time. The Department acknowledges and appreciates Puerto Rico's efforts to implement greater accountability for the use of Federal funds and progress toward signing a contract to procure the services of a Third Party Fiduciary Agent. Accordingly, the Department will be authorizing Puerto Rico to immediately draw down all fiscal year 2019 Department program grant funds as well as all funds under the CARES Act Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund (ESSER I) and Governor's Emergency Education Relief Fund (GEER I) as needed.

Shortly, the Department will provide a follow-up communication with details about the authority to draw down these funds. The Department will continue to provide Puerto Rico access to needed funds until the Third Party Fiduciary Agent is operational.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Miguel A. Cardona".

Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.