



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, DC 20202

November 23, 2021

Racquel Berry-Benjamin
Commissioner of Education
V.I. Department of Education
1834 Kongens Gade
St. Thomas, VI 00802

Dear Commissioner Berry-Benjamin:

I am pleased to approve the U.S. Virgin Islands Department of Education's (VIDE) American Rescue Plan-Outlying Area State Educational Agency (ARP-OA SEA) Implementation plan. This plan, together with the unprecedented funding available under ARP-OA SEA, will help ensure that schools in the U.S. Virgin Islands can continue to reopen safely; support sustained access to in-person instruction throughout the summer and into next school year; and address the social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of students due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), particularly those students most impacted by the pandemic.

VIDE's plan is consistent with all ARP-OA SEA grant terms and conditions and addresses how the SEA will safely return students to in-person instruction, maximize in-person instructional time, sustain safe in-person instruction, and use funds for activities to address learning loss by supporting the implementation of evidence-based interventions, such as summer learning or summer enrichment, extended day, comprehensive afterschool programs, or extended school year programs, and ensure that such interventions respond to students' academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs and address the disproportionate impact of COVID-19. This letter, along with VIDE's approved ARP-OA SEA Implementation plan, will be posted on the U.S. Department of Education's (Department's) website.

Please be aware that approval of VIDE's ARP-OA SEA Implementation plan is not a determination that all the information included in the Implementation plan complies with Federal civil rights requirements, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. It is VIDE's responsibility to comply with these civil rights requirements.

The Department is committed to working in partnership with VIDE so that your ARP-OA SEA funds are quickly put to work to ensure students have sustained access to in-person instruction as well as the comprehensive supports, they need to recover fully from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. As you implement this plan, we expect you to continue meaningfully engaging with stakeholders and the public and revising your plan, as necessary, to best meet the needs of students, parents, and educators. Ongoing engagement with all stakeholders is vital to ensuring

that implementation of your plan is transparent, effective, equitable, inclusive, and best meets the needs of the U.S. Virgin Islands. The thoughtful, evidence-based, and timely use of ARP-OA SEA funds will have a lasting impact on our Nation's schools and help to address the inequities in resources, services, and opportunities available to our students.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Miguel A. Cardona". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Miguel A. Cardona, Ed.D.