



January 25, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Health, Education,
Labor, and Pensions
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairwoman Murray, and Ranking Member Burr:

The Alliance for Excellent Education (All4Ed) is pleased to support the nomination of Dr. Miguel Cardona to be the next U.S. secretary of education. Strong federal leadership is needed to tackle the long-standing inequities in education that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated. Dr. Cardona has the knowledge and experience to lead the U.S. Department of Education (ED) during this critical time. We urge his swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate.

Dr. Cardona is a recognized leader in education practice and policy. Before becoming Connecticut's first Latino education commissioner, he was the state's youngest principal and later named principal of the year. He brought his expertise to the policy arena while serving as cochairman of the [Connecticut Legislative Achievement Gap Task Force](#). He has been a strong champion for historically underserved students and recently supported legislation in Connecticut promoting [diversity in education](#). Next year Connecticut's high schools will be required to offer coursework on the contributions made by African-American, Black, Puerto Rican, and Latino leaders to American history, society, economy, and culture.

Dr. Cardona has been an effective education leader during the COVID-19 pandemic. He understands the ["extraordinary and heightened sense of service"](#) teachers have demonstrated to educate our students. He also understands the challenges caused by the digital divide and their effects on students' abilities to access a high-quality education. Under Dr. Cardona's leadership, and that of Governor Ned Lamont, Connecticut provided every student in need with a learning device and reliable at-home internet access. This is critical, as [one in three](#) Black, Latino, and Native American households nationwide lack the high-speed home internet access needed for remote learning, according to an analysis produced by All4Ed, National Indian Education Association, National Urban League, and UnidosUS.

We know that students—particularly students of color and those in poverty—who already were behind in school when the pandemic began have lost even more ground this year. Sadly, we also know that fewer students are pursuing a college education because of the pandemic. Our country needs swift actions from the Biden administration and Congress to support sustained, long-term solutions to the inequities that existed before COVID-19 and the disparities that are expanding because of it.

Dr. Cardona is a champion for public schools and has worked to ensure that all students, particularly those historically underserved, receive what they need to excel in school and in life. Equally important, as someone who grew up in public housing, was an English learner, and is a first-generation college graduate, Dr. Cardona will serve as an inspiration to millions of students who can see themselves in Dr. Cardona.

ED needs, and our students deserve, a secretary of education who passionately supports public schools and is committed to their success. We look forward to Dr. Cardona's leadership to ensure that all students—no matter their race, religion, background, or ZIP code—thrive. America's youth deserve nothing less.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah S. Delisle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "D".

Deborah S. Delisle
President and CEO