

July 1, 2018

Honorable Julia Keleher
Secretary
Puerto Rico Department of Education
P.O. Box 190759
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00919

Dear Secretary Keleher:

We have approved Puerto Rico's application for Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2018 funds under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA Part B). Our approval is based on our review of the IDEA Part B application submitted by the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE) to the U.S. Department of Education (Department), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), on May 23, 2018, June 18, 2018 and June 20, 2018, including the assurances provided in Section II and incorporated by reference to this letter as noted in Enclosure A, and revised specific assurances submitted on June 28, 2018.

As set forth in Enclosure D, on June 30, 2018, Department-wide Specific Conditions were placed on all Department grants awarded to PRDE, as well as on all grants previously awarded by the Department to PRDE that currently are still available for obligation or liquidation on the date of those specific conditions.¹ These Department-wide Specific Conditions were imposed to ensure that Department grant awards are expended by PRDE in accordance with applicable legal requirements, and the appropriate fiscal accountability measures and management practices and controls, including those established by PRDE under the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) among Puerto Rico, PRDE, and the Department, signed on December 17, 2007, and ensure continued progress in meeting the programmatic requirements of Part B of the IDEA. The reasons for doing so and the specific conditions are detailed in Enclosure D.

PRDE has not achieved compliance with the requirements related to: (1) timeliness of due process hearing decisions (34 CFR §300.515(a) and (c)); (2) assistive technology (Section 612(a)(1) and 34 CFR §300.105); and (3) financial management (34 CFR §§76.530, 300.162(a), 300.202(a)(1) and Subpart E of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Uniform Guidance, codified in 2 CFR Part 200). Therefore, as described in Section II.E. of the Department-wide Specific Conditions, the Department is requiring PRDE to: (1) develop, and submit to OSEP, a corrective action plan (CAP) that addresses the actions it will take to demonstrate compliance with these three remaining areas of longstanding noncompliance, that were previously identified in the 2007 Agreement; and (2) submit two CAP progress reports noting the progress on the activities detailed in the CAP. Based on information PRDE provided in its May 1, 2018 Special Conditions progress report, OSEP concluded that PRDE has satisfied the Special Condition related to the early childhood transition requirement. We appreciate the

¹ Pursuant to the requirements in 2 CFR §200.207, the term "Specific Condition" is used, rather than "Special Condition" for FFY 2018 IDEA Part B grant awards that are issued subject to additional requirements. In this letter, the term "Special Conditions" is used when referencing the State's IDEA Part B grant awards and required reporting associated with the receipt of those funds for years prior to FFY 2018.

steps the PRDE has taken to correct noncompliance related to this key IDEA requirement and expect that PRDE will continue to monitor this area to ensure a high degree of compliance is sustained.

PRDE has provided a specific assurance related to transportation costs for students with disabilities in the Bayamón Educational Region on each of PRDE's IDEA Part B grant awards since FFY 2007. The Commonwealth provided the following specific assurances, received on May 23, 2018, with revised assurances received on June 28, 2018, related to transportation costs for students with disabilities in the Bayamón Educational Region:

1. Throughout the period of fund availability for Puerto Rico's grant awards under Part B of the IDEA for FFY 2018, Puerto Rico assures that until such time as Puerto Rico has demonstrated to the Department that it is in full compliance with the requirements of 34 CFR §76.702 and 2 CFR §§200.302(a); 200.302(b)(3); 200.302(b)(4); 200.303; and 200.317, for all transportation costs for students with disabilities in the Bayamón Region, no IDEA funds will be used to fund the transportation costs of students with disabilities in the Bayamón Region and that any Commonwealth funds used to fund the transportation costs of students with disabilities in the Bayamón Region will not be included in the total amount used to calculate or measure Puerto Rico's compliance with the State maintenance of effort requirement at 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(18) and 34 CFR §300.163 in either the current State fiscal year or the preceding State fiscal years from 2002 to 2017.
2. PRDE must submit documentation to OSEP at least 60 days prior to any use, allocation, accounting or designation of IDEA Part B funds to pay for the transportation costs of students with disabilities in the Bayamón Region; or of any use, allocation, accounting, or designation to include Commonwealth funds used to pay the transportation costs of students with disabilities in the Bayamón Region, in the total amount used to calculate or measure Puerto Rico's compliance with the State maintenance of effort requirement at 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(18) and CFR 34 §300.163. The documentation to be submitted must include an audit report that clearly demonstrates that PRDE is in full compliance with the requirements of 34 CFR §76.702 and 2 CFR §§200.302(a); 200.302(b)(3); 200.302(b)(4); 200.303; and 200.317 for all transportation costs of students with disabilities in the Bayamón Region; and
3. The Commonwealth will provide OSEP with a copy of the memorandum notifying the appropriate finance personnel in Puerto Rico and providing any needed instructions for implementation, so that funds received under Part B of the IDEA will not be used to fund transportation services of students with disabilities in the Bayamón Region until such time as Puerto Rico has submitted, and the Department has approved, documentation, including an audit report, demonstrating compliance with the requirements of 34 CFR §76.702 and 2 CFR §§200.302(a); 200.302(b)(3); 200.302(b)(4); 200.303; and 200.317, and that any Commonwealth funds used to pay the transportation costs of students with disabilities in the Bayamón Region may not be included in the total amount used to

calculate or measure Puerto Rico’s compliance with the State maintenance of effort requirements at 20 U.S.C. 1412(a)(18) and 34 CFR §300.163.

Please note that as part of your application for FFY 2018, the Commonwealth has provided a certification, pursuant to 34 CFR §76.104, that its application meets the requirements of IDEA Part B and that the Commonwealth will operate its Part B program in accordance with all of the required assurances and certifications. Any changes made by the Commonwealth, after OSEP approval, to information that is a part of its application, must meet the public participation requirements in 34 CFR §300.165.

Enclosed are the Commonwealth’s FFY 2018 grant awards for funds currently available under the Department of Education Appropriations Act, 2018, Title III of Division H, P.L. 115-141, for the IDEA Part B Section 611 (Grants to States) and Section 619 (Preschool Grants) programs. These funds are available for obligation by States from July 1, 2018 through September 30, 2020, in accordance with 34 CFR §76.709.

The amount in your award for Section 619 represents the full amount of funds to which you are entitled. However, the amount shown in your award for the Section 611 program is only part of the total funds that will be awarded to you for FFY 2018. Of the \$12,277,848,000 appropriated for Section 611 in FFY 2018, \$2,994,465,000 is available for awards on July 1, 2018, and \$9,283,383,000 will be available for awards on October 1, 2018. Under the Section 611 formula, in a year in which the amount available for allocations to States increases from the prior year, subject to certain maximum and minimum funding requirements, State allocations are based on the amount that each State received under Section 611 for FFY 1999, the relative population of children in the age range for which each State ensures the availability of a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to children with disabilities, and the relative population of children living in poverty in the age range for which each State ensures the availability of FAPE to children with disabilities.²

For FFY 2018, the appropriation for the Preschool Grants program is \$381,120,000. Under the Section 619 formula in a year in which the amount available for allocations to States remains the same or increases from the prior year, State allocations, subject to certain maximum and minimum funding requirements, are based on the amount that each State received under Section 619 for FFY 1997, the relative population of children aged three through five, and the relative population of all children aged three through five living in poverty. Enclosure B provides a short description of how Section 611 funds were allocated and how those funds can be used. In

² The amount that a State’s allocation may increase from one year to the next is capped at the amount the State received in the prior year multiplied by the sum of 1.5 percent and the percentage increase in the total amount appropriated for Part B of IDEA from the prior year. Additionally, the maximum amount that a State may receive in any fiscal year is calculated by multiplying the number of children with disabilities ages 3 through 21 served during the 2004-2005 academic year in that State by 40 percent of the annual per pupil expenditure (APPE), adjusted by the rate of annual change in the sum of 85 percent of the children aged 3 through 21 for whom that State ensures the availability of FAPE and 15 percent of the children living in poverty. Because there are multiple caps, in any year the “effective cap” on a State’s allocation is the lowest cap for that State.

addition, Table I in Enclosure B shows funding levels for distribution of Section 611 funds and the parameters for within-State allocations.

Enclosure C provides a short description of how Section 619 funds were allocated and how those funds can be used. In addition, Table II in Enclosure C shows State-by-State funding levels for distribution of Section 619 funds.

Section 611(e)(1)(C) of the IDEA provides that “[p]rior to expenditure of funds under this paragraph [Section 611(e)(1) concerning funds for State administration], the State shall certify to the Secretary that the arrangements to establish responsibility for services pursuant to Section 612(a)(12)(A) are current.” We read this provision to mean that if a State does not have interagency agreements or other arrangements in place to establish responsibility for the provision of services, the State may not expend funds available to the State under Section 611(e)(1) [State administration funds] until the State has these agreements or arrangements in place.

Under Section 608(a)(2) of the IDEA, each State that receives funds under IDEA Part B is required to inform in writing local educational agencies located in the State of any State-imposed rule, regulation, or policy that is not required by IDEA or Federal regulations. A State may use the same list of State-imposed rules, regulations, and policies that it was required to submit to the Department in Section IV of its IDEA Part B application for this purpose.

In Section V of its IDEA Part B application, pursuant to the authority in IDEA Section 618(a)(3), the State was required to submit data on the total amount of State financial support made available for special education and related services for children with disabilities in State fiscal year (SFY) 2016 and SFY 2017. If OSEP receives information through audits, fiscal monitoring or other means that raises questions about the data your State has provided in Section V, OSEP will follow-up with your State.

Section 604 of the IDEA provides that “[a] State shall not be immune under the 11th amendment to the Constitution of the United States from suit in Federal court for a violation of this [Act].” Section 606 provides that each recipient of assistance under the IDEA make positive efforts to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities in programs assisted under the IDEA. Therefore, by accepting this grant, your State is expressly agreeing as a condition of IDEA funding to a waiver of Eleventh Amendment immunity and to ensuring that positive efforts are made to employ and advance employment of qualified individuals with disabilities in programs assisted under the IDEA.

The enclosed grant awards of FFY 2018 funds are made with the continued understanding that this Office may, from time to time, require clarification of information within your application, if necessary. These inquiries may be necessary to allow us to appropriately carry out our administrative responsibilities related to IDEA Part B.

As a reminder, all prime recipients of IDEA Part B funds must report subaward information as required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA), as amended in 2008. First-tier subaward information must be reported by the end of the following month from when the award was made or obligated. FFATA guidance is found

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at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/leg/recovery/rms-web-conferences.html>. Please contact your State's Fiscal Accountability Facilitator if you have further questions.

We appreciate your ongoing commitment to the provision of quality educational services to children with disabilities.

Sincerely,

/S/

Ruth E. Ryder
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs

Enclosures

Enclosure A
Enclosure B
Enclosure C
Enclosure D

cc: State Director of Special Education