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February 12, 2018

The Hon. Betsy DeVos  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary DeVos:

I write regarding implementation by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) of the education provisions in the recently-enacted *Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018*. See P.L. 115-123 (Division B, Subdivision 1, Title VIII, Department of Education, Hurricane Education Recovery). These provisions make \$2.7 billion available through September 30, 2022 to help meet the educational needs of individuals in Florida, Puerto Rico and other U.S. jurisdictions affected by hurricanes in 2017. Now that the bipartisan effort to enact these education provisions into law has achieved a successful outcome, it is critical that funding be distributed to the communities that need it as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Therefore, I respectfully request that the USDE swiftly issue clear written guidance so that K-12 schools, local educational agencies, state and territory educational agencies, institutions of higher education, and other potential funding recipients have a precise understanding of how to apply for funding, the criteria upon which funding will be allocated, and the allowable uses of such funding. Congress has provided significant guidance in the law itself, but additional agency guidance is necessary. I also ask that USDE provide for an expedited application process.

Education funding in P.L. 115-123 is available for the following broad purposes:

- for temporary emergency impact aid for displaced students, to be allocated as follows:
  - \$10,000 for a displaced student with a disability,
  - \$9,000 for a displaced student with English-language needs, and
  - \$8,500 for a displaced student who does not have a disability or English-language needs.
- to make awards to eligible entities for immediate aid to restart school operations;
- for emergency assistance to institutions of higher education and students attending institutions of higher education in an area directly affected by a covered disaster or emergency (\$100 million);

- for payments to institutions of higher education to help defray the unexpected expenses associated with enrolling displaced students from institutions of higher education directly affected by a covered disaster or emergency (up to \$75 million);
- to provide assistance to local educational agencies serving homeless children and youth (\$25 million); and
- to fund education-related services for local educational agencies and institutions of higher education to help them recover from a traumatic event in which the learning environment has been disrupted (Project SERV; up to \$35 million).

Because I represent a central Florida region that is home to school districts and institutions of higher education that have enrolled thousands of displaced students from Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, I am particularly focused on the process by which these school districts and institutions of higher education can apply for funding and the allowable uses of such funding.

Thank you very much for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Stephanie Murphy  
Member of Congress