

# knowledge alliance

January 25, 2021

Senator Patty Murray  
Chair, Senate Committee on Health,  
Education, Labor, and Pensions  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murray,

Knowledge Alliance, a non-partisan, non-profit, is comprised of leading education organizations committed since 1971 to the greater use of high-quality and relevant data, research, evaluation, and innovation in education policy and practice at all levels. Collectively, we promote the use of rigorous research to figure out “what works,” and why, to improve student outcomes and then share those findings with policymakers, practitioners, and the general public.

We write to you today to urge a swift and bipartisan confirmation of Dr. Miguel Cardona as U.S. Secretary of Education. As our nation seeks to recover from the devastating impacts of a global pandemic, our nation’s education system needs a leader who can effectively address the widening achievement gaps and disparities using sound, evidence-based policy solutions. Dr. Cardona is a career educator who understands what is needed in classrooms, school districts, and state education agencies.

Critical to COVID response and recovery and systemic educational improvements is a strong research and technical assistance infrastructure that includes programs at the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) –such as the Regional Educational Laboratories (RELs) and the Research, Development, and Dissemination (RD&D) program – coupled with the Comprehensive Centers (CCs) and the Education Innovation and Research (EIR) program at the U.S. Department of Education (ED). As Dr. Cardona knows well during his tenure as a commissioner and superintendent, through these programs new research is developed, technical assistance and support provided, and knowledge disseminated to states, districts and schools.

As Connecticut’s Commissioner of Education, Dr. Cardona has been intimately involved with the Region 2 Comprehensive Center (Center) project to develop and implement a statewide framework to enable school district leaders to understand, monitor, and evaluate the overall health of the district system and implement policies and practices that are proactively designed to support and sustain continuous improvement through changes in leadership. We appreciate and respect that Dr. Cardona has also been very supportive of the additional important projects in the state led by the Center in collaboration with the Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast and Islands (REL-NEI) focused on social and emotional learning. These projects help

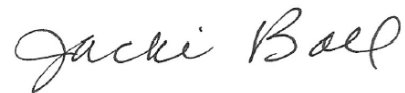
local education agencies (LEAs) meet the increasing needs of students across the state and support the development of LEA strategic plans to increase educator diversity and students' access to educators from diverse racial, ethnic, and linguistic backgrounds. Furthermore, during his tenure as superintendent at Meriden Public Schools, Dr. Cardona participated in a REL-NEI continuous improvement project focused on English Learners. As an alliance, we are excited to work with the incoming Secretary on similarly impactful projects across the nation.

The need to focus on what works for students, educators and school leaders using research and evidence-based practices has always been critical, but now more than ever it is imperative. We have a great sense of urgency to ensure states, districts and schools are using interventions and supports to address the academic, social, emotional, and other related impacts of COVID on our nation's students.

Knowledge Alliance and its member organizations look forward to working with the incoming Secretary of Education and Congress to ensure students and educators across the education continuum have the evidence, resources and supports they need to succeed.

Please contact me at [jball@knowledgeall.net](mailto:jball@knowledgeall.net) or 202-336-2759 with any questions or to provide further input as needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacki Ball".

Jacki Ball  
President  
Knowledge Alliance