



## GOVERNMENT OF PUERTO RICO

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DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
Office of the Secretary

September 17, 2018

Frank Brogan  
Assistant Secretary for Elementary and Secondary Education  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20202

Dear Assistant Secretary Brogan,

On behalf of the Puerto Rico Department of Education (PRDE), I would like to thank you and your staff for the assistance you have already provided to the victims of Hurricanes Irma and Maria and the willingness the U.S. Department of Education (ED or the Department) has displayed to work with the PRDE as we continue working to restore operations to normal and rebuild in the aftermath of the hurricanes' devastation. At this time, the PRDE would like to formally request additional fiscal flexibility for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 under the Title III, Part A of Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015.

Specifically, the PRDE is requesting that the period of availability for the FFY 2016 Title III-A funds be extended an additional year, until September 30, 2019. The FY 2016 funds became available on July 1, 2016 and are available to obligate through September 30, 2018. As such, if the period of availability for the FY 2016 grant is not extended, about 61% of the FY 2016 award will lapse on September 30, 2018. Furthermore, given the devastating impact the Hurricanes have had on PRDE and Puerto Rico in general, the PRDE seeks this flexibility so that the destruction from Hurricanes does not result in lapsing of otherwise permissible costs. In addition, this flexibility will not only help the PRDE return to a fully operational education system but also help our students with their academic achievements

Following the aftermath of the Hurricanes, the PRDE has worked collaboratively with the Department and the flexibility that the Department has exercised throughout this past year has been instrumental in our recovery efforts. The Hurricanes have had an extreme financial impact on the Island over the past year as significant State and local resources were directed to rescue efforts in the weeks following the storms and toward rebuilding efforts in the ensuing months. PRDE offices were closed for several weeks following the hurricanes and for months PRDE staff balanced efforts to restore ordinary operations, respond to damage caused by the hurricanes, and resume normal operations. In fact, normal operations did not begin again until the early part of 2018, and understandably obligations of the FY 2016 funds stalled. The Island is still working

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tirelessly to reconstruct infrastructure, including repairing storm-damaged school facilities across the Island. In addition, thousands of Puerto Rican residents have fled to the mainland, further contributing to the economic impact of the storms.

In accordance to federal regulations, the PRDE has provided the public with notice and a reasonable opportunity to comment and provide input on this request.

My office would be happy to further discuss this request, should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Yanin Dieppa at 787-586-4191 or [dieppapy@de.pr.gov](mailto:dieppapy@de.pr.gov). I will make myself available to discuss this requests and next steps with you at your earliest convenience.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Julia B. Keleher, Ed. D.  
Secretary of Education  
Puerto Rico Department of Education

Cc: Jose A. Viana  
Assistant Deputy Secretary and Director  
Office of English Language Acquisition