



March 9, 2021

The Honorable Miguel Cardona
Secretary of Education
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Dear Secretary Cardona:

On behalf of America Forward and the America Forward Coalition, I write to offer my congratulations on your recent confirmation as U.S. Secretary of Education, to introduce you to the America Forward Coalition, and to share our Coalition's input on the guidance we hope you will consider sharing with state and local education agencies, school leaders, families, students, nonprofits and other partners working on our nation's recovery and response.

America Forward (www.americaforward.org) is the nonpartisan policy initiative of New Profit, a pioneering national venture philanthropy organization that invests in breakthrough social entrepreneurs and systems-change initiatives, catalyzes and builds their impact, and transforms how government and philanthropy pursue social change to ensure that all people can thrive. The America Forward Coalition is made up of more than 100 innovative, high-impact [organizations](#) across the country that are working to solve some of our most pressing challenges in education, workforce development, and poverty alleviation.

While the challenges facing students, educators, families, and school communities are complex, we have no doubt you and your team have the ability to meet them, and to advance a more equitable, holistic vision for public education across the country. Today, our nation faces the enormous task of responding and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. As Congress works to authorize key elements of the American Rescue Plan, we recognize the tremendous work ahead for the Department, to not only implement programs and funds authorized by new relief legislation, but also those programs and funds enacted under previous emergency bills.

The ongoing work of America Forward Coalition organizations across the country provides strong examples of innovative, evidence-based approaches that improve holistic outcomes for students, effectively engage families, support educators, and more. We are eager to share these learnings as we respond to and recover from the pandemic, and our Coalition organizations stand ready to partner with your team and with other key leaders at the federal, state and local levels.

As you continue to provide resources and direction to safely reopen schools, I want to share with you suggested guidance from the America Forward Coalition, which we hope you will consider sharing with state and local education agencies, school leaders, families, students, nonprofits and other partners working on recovery and response.

Thank you for your consideration of our recommendations. And again, our congratulations on your confirmation. We look forward to working with you in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah S. Smolover". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deborah S. Smolover
Executive Director
America Forward