



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
**School Psychologists**

4340 East West Highway, Suite 402, Bethesda, MD 20814

PHONE: 301-657-0270

FAX: 301-657-0275

January 25, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chairwoman, Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

Dear Chairwoman Murray:

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) is a non-partisan organization that represents over 24,000 school psychologists who work with students, educators, and families to support the academic achievement, positive behavior, and mental wellness of all students, especially those who struggle with barriers to learning. School psychologists play a critical role in ensuring all children and youth have access to the supports they need to be successful in school and in life. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the existing inequities in our public education system and intensified the mental health crisis among our nation's young people. Addressing the myriad issues facing our students and schools will require coordinated federal leadership. As such, we urge you to swiftly begin the confirmation process for Miguel Cardona, nominee for Secretary of Education.

NASP does not endorse or oppose political appointees. However, Dr. Cardona's tenure as an educator, administrator, and state superintendent in Connecticut provides him with the experience necessary to provide critical federal leadership and effectively support state and local districts through this crisis. Much of Dr. Cardona's work as an educator aligns with NASP's priorities of holding all students to high expectations, addressing inequity, and supporting students' social emotional learning and mental and behavioral health. Dr. Cardona has actively engaged with school psychologists in his role as state superintendent and they note that Dr. Cardona has prioritized the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) supports, Social Emotional Learning programming, increased mental and behavioral health support (restorative practices/reduction in suspensions), and increased enrichment opportunities for students. These approaches are foundational to schools' ability to support students' learning and mental health and must be a priority if we are going to effectively meet the increased level of needs resulting from the pandemic. Additionally, Dr. Cardona has focused on defying low expectations, especially for low income/economically marginalized students and children of color, another issue that has become even more urgent over the past year. Importantly, he facilitated improved outcomes for students with open and honest discussions about data to drive changes to practice and policy. These efforts align with NASP policy priorities, and if confirmed, we hope he would bring this same focus on equity, student mental wellness, and data-based decision making to the Department of Education.

We look forward to a timely and bipartisan confirmation and ongoing collaboration with the Department of Education and with Congress to advance policies and practices to improve school and student success. Please contact Kelly Vaillancourt Strobach, NASP Director, Policy and Advocacy with any questions ([kvaillancourt@naspsweb.org](mailto:kvaillancourt@naspsweb.org)).

Sincerely,

Wendy Price, Psy.D, NCSP  
President

Kathleen Minke, PhD, NCSP  
Executive Director

CC: Members of the United States Senate